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W. L. WATKINSON, D.D.

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Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul

By

WILLIAM L. WATKINSON, D.D., LL.D.

Author of "Life's Unexpected Issues," "The Fatal Barter," "The Bane and the Antidote," etc.

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TO THE

REV. FREDERIC W. MACDONALD

WHOSE RARE GIFTS I ADMIRE

AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP I PRIZE

PREFACE

To the author it appears that the repeated attacks made on Christianity as guilty of doing injustice to human nature require from time to time some answer. And just now a review of the subject is not unseasonable. The popularity of a scorner like Nietzsche is a sign of the times, and on this special matter calls for criticism. True, much of his writing smells unpleasantly of the "ever stronger doses of chloral, and of that fatal Eastern drug given him by the Dutch gentleman from Java" to which his sympathetic biographers tell us he was addicted; yet the literary merit of his writing invests with plausibility his wild theories, and secures for him in certain quarters considerable attention and admiration.

The main point of his polemic against the Christian faith is not only that it impoverishes life, but that it is the greatest enemy of all that is fundamental in life. The philosopher's view

of morals, and especially of Christian ethics, is thus stated by one of his disciples: "In the name of morality we are called upon to crush out, or at any rate to fight bitterly against that which lies at the very root of life, against that which conditions life. This in itself, and if it were alone, would suffice to condemn morality." All systems of accepted morality are regarded as pernicious, and the Christian code, being supremely austere, is denounced as specially fatal to the strength and glory of humanity. The design of the present volume is to show that the faith of Christ does no violence whatever to the integrity of our nature, but, on the contrary, handsomely justifies the passions, and richly supplies the light and power requisite for their development and discipline. We maintain that revelation recognizes our life in its wholeness, fullness, intensity. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly," was the declaration of our Lord. He came that all the possibilities of life might be realized for His every individual disciple, that all might know life in its beauty, plenitude, and power.

But our impulses and appetites are not to be left to unchecked expression. Henry Thoreau, noticing that the women of his day appeared demure and subdued, remarked that they looked "as if they were going for the doctor." Whereupon Emerson asks, "Has our Christianity saddled and bridled us?" However the serious aspect of the American woman might be accounted for, this is just what Christianity *has* done. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem upon "a colt whereon no man ever yet sat," He furnished a symbol of the genius of His faith which provides the sovereign discipline that enables human nature to reach its ideal perfection. Nietzsche prefers to see the ideal man in Mazeppa bound to a wild horse. The whole argument of this type of reasoners, that we are wronged by the Christian restraint of passion, is just as logical as it would be to argue that our fire stations are a menace to our firesides.

We ought not, however, to be above learning from our enemies. Much of the contents of Nietzsche is little better than the babble of

Bedlam ; yet it may not be altogether in vain that he emphasizes the validity of passions of which the saints justly stand in awe, but to which perhaps they sometimes do less than justice.

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"*The passions must be purified; by good guidance and control they can all be made innocent. Even hatred may be praiseworthy when it arises only from a keen love of good. Whatever purifies the passions strengthens them, makes them more lasting, and the sources of greater delight.*"—JOUBERT.

"*There is some soul of goodness in things evil,*
Would men observingly distil it out."
SHAKESPEARE.

"*Every vice is only an exaggeration of a necessary and virtuous function. Chaos is Paradise dislocated.*"—EMERSON.

"*For to* subdue *the passions, which is thought so often to be the sum of duty respecting them, is possible enough to a proud dullness; but to* excite *them rightly, and make them strong for good, is the work of the unselfish imagination.*"—RUSKIN.

IN PRAISE OF AMBITION

"*Wherefore we make it our aim* [*margin, 'are ambitious'*] . . . *to be well-pleasing unto Him.*"—2 Cor. v. 9.

"*But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; and that ye study* [*margin, 'be ambitious'*] *to be quiet.*"—1 Thess. iv. 10, 11.

"*Study* [*be ambitious*] *to show thyself approved unto God.*"—2 Tim. ii. 15.

IT is characteristic of St. Paul that from time to time he employs words and expressions which had acquired sinister significance, boldly using them in the advocacy of truth and righteousness. He sought to rescue terms which had suffered degradation, to restore their high purport, and justify their place in the vocabulary of godliness and virtue. As it was his peculiar calling to declare the grace of God to depraved humanity, so he laboured to redeem language and to restore to noblest use words and epithets which had come to signify only base passions and things.

It is the observation of a distinguished French writer that "a man cannot change the essence of his nature, but he can guide his diverse faculties towards a right path; he can almost succeed in turning his faults to account—and this, indeed, is the great secret and the great problem of education." What this student of human nature was faintly feeling after, St. Paul saw clearly. He understood the great problem and secret of moral education. He recognized that the faults of men spring from the corruption and misdirection of essentially divine qualities and aspirations; that education in its fullest sense implies the purification and development of our primal instincts and passions, and their direction to exalted ends; and that the Christian faith supplies the energy by which we may not only "almost succeed in turning our faults to account," but wholly succeed in transforming them into virtues. So in the treatment of high character and duty the apostle employs with great freedom such ominous words as "ambition," "anger," "guile," "jealousy," "provocation," "covetousness," and words of similar import, lending them an unexpected sanction. The truth is, that the vices suggested by these words are really caricatures of original

and gracious faculties of our nature which true religion does not for a moment seek to destroy, only to free them from whatever obscures and distorts, giving them pure, beautiful, and beneficent expression. According to Emerson, "The laws of disease are the laws of health masked." The apostle well understood this fact so far as it concerned the moral sphere; and purging the disease by virtue of the word that makes clean, he retains for the restored normal passion the once-abused designation. Exulting in the divine grace which hallows our whole being, St. Paul in the very spirit of triumph rescues these words from all impure associations, and sanctifies them to set forth the graces which constitute the glory of humanity. He gives a high example of the magic that educes the lily from a weed, the chemistry that extorts sparkling gold from vile dross, the alchemy of nature that converts a morbid particle into pearl. Such is the purity of the writer's spirit and design, the loftiness and strength of his doctrine, such the context which guards the sinister words, that no danger is incurred of their being construed into any sanction of the vices they once denoted. Henceforth they are safeguarded, being touched with a live coal from off the altar,

and by their consecration to the highest argument and service.

Note, then, St. Paul's treatment of the thirst known as ambition, and to which the passages at the head of this chapter apply. The apostle was well aware that the passion in question is chargeable with the worst evils which have devastated mankind. All history, as he knew it, was little more than a sordid story of the striving for power and fame written in blood. Nothing more need be said of the passion in question than that it is responsible for the darkest tragedies, for measureless suffering and misery. Smitten by its glamour, all the obligations of morality and humanity are forgotten, and the rights and happiness of millions are sacrificed in the rage for greatness and dominion. The ambitious

> Wade through slaughter to a throne,
> And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

The wrongs springing from this lust in more obscure men and ways are only less than infinite. The apostle not merely knew this quite well; he also saw this pride of power intruding into the Church of Christ, and threatening its very existence. Members of it "desired in all things to have the pre-eminence," and various parties

arose under their several champions contending for the mastery. The spirit of our Lord's unregenerate disciples, when they strove which should be the greatest, reappeared in the congregations of the saints to dishonour and destroy.

Yet vividly, painfully conscious of these facts, St. Paul makes no attack on the passion itself, he does not attempt its extirpation, he propounds no discipline by which the spirit of the race should be broken. He knew that if the worst evils were occasioned by this aspiration, it must also be credited with the most splendid advances in human progress and civilization. He was perfectly well aware that emulation and rivalry play an essential part in the education of the world, and that if the stimulus of ambition were once removed degeneration and dissolution would follow. As expressed by Bishop Lightfoot, "If by ambition angels fell, by ambition men have risen"; and St. Paul was the last man to deny the vital principle underlying all life and ensuring all its ideals. To sum up the matter in a single phrase, he recognized in our craving for approbation and influence an innate impulse, a fundamental principle of our nature, a seed of God's own

planting. Nietzsche cries, "Throw not away the hero in thy soul"; this was exactly to echo what St. Paul had already said. His design was far otherwise than to discredit the mighty passion. In allowing the authority of the thirst for excellence and distinction, it was the special service of the apostle to purify the yearning, to free it from false ideals, to direct it into right channels, to obsess it with noble objects. Ambition can achieve splendid results only by virtue of splendid qualities, and it is the task of the apostle to explain and enforce these qualities and conditions.

First, we consider ambition *in character*. In his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians (v. 9), we find St. Paul writing, "Wherefore we make it our aim" [or, as the Greek is expressed in the margin of the R.V., "are ambitious"], "whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him," that is, well-pleasing unto the Lord. Christ Jesus is the criterion by which they test themselves and the whole sweep of their conduct and activity. Once satisfied that any word, deed, or course of action is in agreement with His spirit, example, or commandment, that it harmonizes with the interests of His kingdom, they will regard it as right and

binding, as a matter of delightful obligation. Their appeal was not to abstract law, or to the letter of an ethical system; but beholding eternal righteousness and love incarnate in their Master, the disciples were enthusiastic in all things to be determined by His conduct, precept, and spirit. Their very pride and passion was to emulate their Lord, at every step to be sure of His sanction, so to live that they might continually bask in His smile. And, as already observed, all this is not as a faint purpose, but a master passion. "Our *one* ambition is still to be well-pleasing unto Him." [1] Ambition covets greatness; and St. Paul proposes greatness of character as the primal and sublimest object of aspiration.

What a noble sphere is thus discovered for the gratification of the passion for power and excellence! To emulate Christ, and so to emulate Him as to secure His approbation! Great teachers in literature, art, or eloquence usually endeavour to animate students by fixing their attention and imagination on a supreme master. One of the most ancient of these preceptors seeks thus to kindle emulation: "If ever, therefore, we are engaged in a work

[1] Arthur S. Way, *Letters of St. Paul.*

which requires a grandeur of style and exalted sentiments, would it not then be of use to raise in ourselves such reflections as these: How in this case would Homer or Plato or Demosthenes have raised their thoughts? Or, if it be historical: How would Thucydides? For these celebrated persons, being proposed by us for our pattern and imitation, will in some degree lift up our souls to the standard of their own genius. It will be yet of greater use if to the preceding reflections we add these: What would Homer or Demosthenes have thought of this piece? Or, What judgement would they have passed upon it?"[1] And succeeding teachers tender to their pupils similar advice. In consistency with this line of stimulation, St. Paul fixes the soul on a great name, on the Name above every name. The worthiest of all the prizes for which we may contend is moral excellence, with its implications of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life; and that we may reach the highest excellence the full current of the soul's desire must flow towards Him whose name is love, whose doctrine is truth, whose essence is purity, whose character is beauty. Ambition is a yearning to be some-

[1] Longinus.

thing; and the yearning for personal greatness can know no loftier aim than to be changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let it not, however, be supposed that this expression of ambition in the direction of character excludes or abates ambition in other spheres. That it does so is one of the charges brought against the Christian faith. It is assumed that whilst the believer is engrossed with the moral ideal, which is treated as a fictitious ideal, the realities of greatness in wealth, scholarship, status, and pleasure are being missed by him. Genius, valour, fortune, aggrandizement, are despised and neglected; excellence in the practical world is counted vain. Distinction in physical prowess, mental creativeness, artistic skill, valiant and brilliant achievement, are contemned by the righteous and treated as negligible. In creating enthusiasm for goodness the priest is simply duping us with "the likeness of a kingly crown," whilst the solid and glorious regalia of a virile manhood are being filched from us and lost for ever. Such, shall we say, is the fluent ribaldry of Nietzsche. Its falsehood and folly are evident. To thirst for the highest attribute of humanity awakens

an avidity for perfection in all lesser gifts and pursuits. The Cullinan diamond does not abate the world's admiration for the more modest gems; on the contrary, the crown jewel reflects fresh lustre on all its shining kindred, and sharpens the common appetite for their possession. Moral excellence stimulates men to make the best of themselves in all respects; it reveals the strange value of everything that concerns our being and destiny; it empowers us to realize the fullness of our personal gift, and qualifies us to shine in every sphere of action to which we are called. "Upon His head were many crowns." First, the crown of righteousness, then all other symbols of power and greatness—the greenest laurel of genius, honour's coronet, wealth's golden circlet, the trophies of adventure, the wreath of victory, the diadem of dominion, the garland of fame, the tiara of beauty, ah! and pleasure's wreath of reddest roses with sweetest perfume. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23).

False ambition degrades its slaves, whilst the purer it is the more it exalts. The lawful ambitions of the natural life develop our faculties; coveting the large, the high, the

splendid, the possibilities of the aspirant are evolved, his latent resources elicited, and the utmost merit of manhood attained. But what a pure and mighty spring of development is the passion to emulate Christ! If the greatness of human nature is revealed in its ambitions and attained through them, surely the last and divinest superiority is reached when through a holy fervour to please Christ we become like Him. When He becomes our ideal and prize, ambition is no longer "the last infirmity of noble minds"; from first to last it is the fount of strength and peace. Of such we may say with the old poet:

> His joy enlarged his shape,
> And with his lifted mind he taller grew.

Secondly, mark the action of sacred ambition *in duty*. And here let us be guided by the second passage quoted above in which St. Paul uses the much-abused word. "But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; and that ye study [margin, 'be ambitious'] to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands" (1 Thess. iv. 10, 11). A word is necessary to show the meaning and force of this passage. "The disquiet or unsteadiness which prevailed in the Thessalonian Church is

to be sought for in the religious sphere. It was, as it appears, an excitement of mind which had been called forth by the new world of thought produced by Christianity; but an excitement, on the one hand, risen to such an unnatural height that worldly business was neglected, and idleness stepped into the place of a regular laborious life; and, on the other hand, manifesting itself by such a fanatical spiritual zeal that the Christians by such a line of conduct must fall into discredit with those who are not Christians."[1] In the presence of this perilous excitement St. Paul exhorts the saints to remain cool and patient, diligent in their several callings. They were to make it a point of honour to avoid a feverish enthusiasm; to make it their ambition to live quietly, performing their personal duties, earning their bread by the labour of their hands.

Here ambition is brought into an entirely new sphere, directed to a most unusual end. Hitherto the equivocal passion found its almost exclusive theatre in the high places of the earth. It has frequented palaces, sought its prizes in parliaments, fastened its gaze "where Fame's proud temple shines afar," dared the tented

[1] Meyer.

field, displayed itself in the limelight. Pageants and pomp have attended its march; it has been warmed by the applause of listening senates; the noise of warriors with garments rolled in blood and the tumult of the people have been the breath of its nostrils. It has courted only the most dazzling prizes—high office, military renown, literary lionism, title, stars, gold. But our text brings it into the lowliest sphere, relates it to the dim population, sets it to the modest task of promoting quiet and industry among the classes who earn a living by working with their hands.

Is there not a legitimate place for the action of ambition in this less pretentious sphere? May not the lowliest workers reasonably cherish and obey sublimest enthusiasms? Nietzsche knows only "masters" and "slaves": with frenzied eloquence extolling the aristocracy of genius as alone fit to survive, whilst the undistinguished, with cold-blooded contempt, are consigned to the dust-heap. But sane men form another estimate of society. Sir Martin Conway, writing on his favourite theme, makes this reflection: "Most of us, who delight in mountain scenery, praise this peak or that, this broken glacier, wide-spreading snow-field,

or intricacy of splintered ridges, forgetting that it is often the unobtrusive, tenderly modelled alps below, that endow these high eminences with half their charm. The beauty of a scene depends upon the harmony of all its parts." [1] Thus wise thinkers, whilst regarding with reverence the peaks and domes of society, the striking eminences of genius glowing with strange lights, do not fall into the vulgar error of making divinities of the gifted few and dirt of the common multitude; they remember that the high eminences owe half their charm to the unobtrusive mass, and that the beauty of society depends upon the harmony of all its parts. Renan tells us that he inherited the accumulated capital of thirteen centuries of thoughts and sensations, hoarded up by his ancestors during their obscure lives; and rational greatness never forgets its immense debt in many ways to the obscure. Only on the ground of intellectual disease can the revilings of cynics be condoned. St. Paul is far from this morbid mood. He never forgets the majesty of man, the honourableness of the humble. Roman sculptors are said to make a great study of the joints, hands, and feet; so

[1] *The Alps.*

the apostle in his anatomy of the body politic does honour to "hands" and "feet," recognizing how "God has tempered the body together, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked."

Hewers of wood and drawers of water are as capable of high enthusiasms as are the famous who cut down the thick trees or the nobles who dig the wells with their sceptres. In the lowliest sphere the highest qualities are demanded. If the working man is to play the man, he must possess to the utmost those qualities which go to the making of heroes, conquerors, and martyrs—thought, patience, courage, discipline, and endurance of the first order. In this sphere essential service may be rendered the race. Sceptre and crown, the mace of corporations and parliaments, the sword of the warrior, instruments of music, the palette of the artist, and the tube of the scientist, have their great significance; yet not a whit less so the tools of the artisan, the pick of the miner, the trowel, the plough, the spade, and crooked scythe. Théophile Gautier proudly writes: "The goldsmith works only for emperors, popes, kings, princes, and the fortunate people of the world"; but, we may add, he

who labours with his hands in ordinary tasks is the benefactor of rich and poor alike; and, if he labours intelligently, is solaced by the pleasure springing from the consciousness of practical philanthropy. All such servants of humanity are also members of God's Legion of Honour. In this lowly sphere, too, the highest rewards are accessible. The consciousness of duty loyally done, of character perfected through obedience, the unfading garland of moral conquest and eternal life—these are the crowning prizes, and they belong to the faithful with one talent equally with the exceptional few who trade with ten.

"Ambitious to be quiet." Sublime passion! Vulgar ambition is satisfied only whilst it creates sensations; but superior souls remember that in quiet places, in the pacific spirit, and in unostentatious service are noble characters evolved, happiness tasted, and the true wealth of nations minted. "Real power is not measured by the noise men make," and the day shall reveal it. Let, then, the lowliest cherish a pure contentment, a just pride, a noble, far-reaching ambition. Robert Louis Stevenson, in *An Inland Voyage*, tells how he purchased the French hawker's little book which "contained

pieces instinct with the brave independence of the poorer class in France. There you might read how the woodcutter gloried in his axe, and the gardener scorned to be ashamed." Let all of similar rank remember that they are called to glory, and that they too may know the luxury of love and power, of aspiration and achievement. Let them shine by fine actions, as emulous worldlings shine in stars and spangles. Let them vie one with another as to who shall best set forth the merits of that higher faith and life which it is their august privilege to share, illustrate, and defend.

It must be kept in mind, however, that whilst Christianity reconciles the humble to their modest situation by revealing its large moral possibilities, it does not in the least degree forbid or damp their social aspiration. We reiterate what has already been suggested. In nature are lovely creatures doomed to dwell in the abyss in mud and darkness, without any desire or hope of ascending to the shining waters above and the glories of the day; but this is no parable of the situation assigned by the Christian faith to the humble poor. It enjoins ambition as certainly as it does resignation. As Robertson states it, "Be contented,

yet aspire : that should be the faith of all, and the two are quite compatible." Indeed it is impossible to improve ourselves in any one particular without enthusing our whole being and awaking aspiration. To stir and kindle the moral and spiritual elements is to agitate the mental, and any enlargement or uplifting of the soul soon tells in the remotest regions of our personality and circumstance. Every converted man is conscious of this. The upward look creates the upward tendency in the terrestrial as well as the spiritual. By an inward necessity we are urged to make the best of ourselves every way. According to the philosophy of Nietzsche, society is divided into the intellectual Brahmins for whom the world exists, and the pariah caste which exists for the pleasure of its intellectual masters ; whilst the low caste may never hope to rank with their godships. Christianity knows nothing of such distinctions. It begets in every man a sense of greatness, urges him to realize and refine whatever faculty he possesses ; and if each talent found in the grounds of the nature of the individual is made the best of, it follows that none will fall short of his high designation. Our ambition is set upon ourselves rather than upon our estate, but that

is the truest way to our worldly inheritance, and let that inheritance be more or less, conspicuous or obscure, splendid or servile, it is yet honourable and sufficing. If it be true that the aspirational is dying out of men, it is no fault of the faith of Christ, which so powerfully appeals to our imagination and passions, which imparts such a vivid sense of self-respect, and strengthens us to walk upon the high places of the earth. If the aspirational in any direction dies down in men, it is because they have ceased to believe in the greatness of their nature and destiny.

Finally, note the place and dignity of true ambition in *service*. "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15, R.V.). In the A.V. it stands, "Study to show thyself approved unto God"; the same word being used to express the original as in the translation of the two passages just considered. The sense of the verse now before us would equally justify the translation, "be ambitious." Here again is a rare sphere for a mighty ambition. Have for your ideal in work and aim that the truth of Christ shall be set forth in thorough and

masterly fashion, be ambitious to excel as His herald. Serve humanity in the spirit of Christ, emulate in beneficence His example. Set your heart upon reaching a glorious eminence among the benefactors of the race. Carry out the magnificent purpose of the Lord, not as a sordid hireling, but as a soldier feeling that his knapsack holds a marshal's baton, and who is fired with patriotic ideals and devotion. Labour in the field of the world, not as a slothful servant, but as a whole-hearted ploughman, who proudly drives a straight furrow so that the harvest shall be plenteous. In the exposition of Christ's redemptive message, in the enforcement of His claims, in the defence and extension of His kingdom, put forth your whole genius and strength, as the impassioned artist does in the service of beauty, or the scientist in the pursuit of knowledge, or as does the unfaltering hero seeking glory in the cannon's mouth. The apostle himself knew this holy ambition in all its frenzy. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labours more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft."

What a marvellous change has ambition suffered, what an altogether different thing it

has become! In the past it has been notoriously egoistic and destructive. To secure personal ascendency rival chiefs have sacrificed the happiness of millions; it is no exaggeration to say that ambition has mainly been a vice, and a vice costing the race more suffering than any other vice. The malign star of Napoleon rained wormwood and blood on the nations. And in myriads of instances, where the hunger for place and power works less dramatically, it works none the less disastrously. But, on the contrary, the zeal of Christ was to bless and save; He endured the cross, despising the shame, for the glory that was set before Him, the glory of bringing many sons unto glory; and just as we follow "*His* star," our passion of consecration is fruitful only of good and blessing. When the aim is to please Him, when the heart glows in the white heat of His love, our whole nature streams forth in deeds and labours of unselfishness and sacrifice. Here, then, is an object worthy of the soul's master passions, a crown of glory compared with which all other prizes are as the toys of childhood.

Nietzsche is never weary of extolling the beauty of suffering and the grandeur of the heroes who cause the most of it. Men of

vitality, audacity, cruelty, fierce with the lust of war and conquest, who persistently paint the world red, these are the idols before whom he lavishes hot incense. The world is nearest to his idea when most like the shambles. He is quite prepared to take over the Inquisition as a going concern, sharpening its teeth, tightening its screws, lighting its fires. What, then, was he doing whilst glorifying brutality and inciting to bloodshed? "Nietzsche loved the sunshine and the stars, and the moonlight on the lagoons of Venice, and the soft caressing music of the south which brings with it a gentle breeze of Mediterranean air." "Sunshine and blue sky were necessaries of life to him. Nice, under that 'halcyon sky,' and with the blue expanse of water beneath. Among the grandeurs of the High Engadine"; such were the scenes in which he loved to luxuriate. Here "he admired the beauties of nature, the beauties of art and of music."[1] Such was the man who exhorts us not to cast the hero out of our soul, such the charming scenes in which he chose to dream, such the delicate delights by which he was engrossed, and in this æsthetic paradise was elaborated his gospel of truculence. Turn

[1] G. Chatterton-Hill, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche.*

from this perfumed apologist of brutality to St. Paul. "In labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. xi. 23-27). Stage heroics are succeeded by the real heroism of one urged on by sublimest ambition. Nothing here of sunshine and stars, of moon-lighted lagoons, of blue skies and blue waters, of soft caressing music. Nietzsche had a poor opinion of St. Paul, and little wonder; Napoleon, it is said, was a great admirer of the apostle, and we may by preference accept the soldier's verdict. But even yet the heroism of St. Paul was infinitely beyond that of Napoleon. The apostle was himself a martyr, enduring stern and multifold suffering for the high advantage of others.

Beau Brummell criticizing John Wesley, or Oscar Wilde deprecating Livingstone, is of the same order, only less absurd than the spectacle of Nietzsche scorning St. Paul. The one an actor in rhetorical spangles wildly tearing a passion to tatters: the other a serene martyr, nobly bearing in his own person only less than infinite suffering and sorrow, so that his fellows might share with him the unsearchable riches he had found in Christ.

Here is the most splendid sphere that Christianity opens up to ambition. The men who have shed splendour on the pages of history, whom poetry has crowned, whom brass and marble have immortalized, were not superfine cynics who from beds of roses found æsthetic pleasure in the contemplation of the sufferings of others, or in the infliction of such suffering, but rather brave souls who endured vicarious suffering for the common security and happiness. To dare, to strive, to bleed in the service of humanity, is to secure the grandest of all crowns, although it be a crown of thorns—is to ascend the highest of all thrones, although it be a scaffold. And ever since Christ suffered on Calvary to redeem the race, He has not wanted like-minded heroes to follow in His train. This divinest sphere of

sacrificial service has through all intervening generations been thronged with the boldest and bravest spirits contending for the brightest of crowns, animated by the sublimest of passions. All other ambitions are pale beside this.

IN PRAISE OF BOASTING

"I say again, Let no man think me foolish; but if ye do, yet as foolish receive me, that I also may glory a little. That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as in foolishness in this confidence of glorying."—2 Cor. xi. 16, 17.

IN the process of evolution certain insects and birds of feeble character have acquired the aspect of more powerful species, without sharing in any degree the faculty and force of the creatures they mimic; thus the boaster will affect the possession of knowledge, courage, virtue, skill, or riches of which he is entirely destitute. Colonel Cunningham, in *Plagues and Pleasures of Life in Bengal*, tells of an old peacock in the Zoological Garden in Calcutta, who from some cause or other failed to produce a train at the close of one moulting season. Of this, however, he seemed to be blissfully unaware, and in due course proceeded to set up his short turkey-like tail to the utmost, and to strut, wheel, and back about as though

he were decked in full pomp. The show was almost sad in its disgraceful folly. How often are mortals beguiled by some similar illusion! They feed their vanity by assuming that they possess splendid attributes of which they are utterly destitute, and thus expose themselves to ridicule and humiliation. Such pretence is justly despised. "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" (Prov. xxv. 14). In other instances the boaster is guilty of exaggerating gifts and merits which in some degree he actually possesses; he seeks to magnify in his own eyes and in the eyes of others what he is and does. As the Orientals say, "Out of a feather he makes a peacock." This vaunting excites mistrust, regret, contempt. In a yet different class is the boaster who parades personal qualities and achievements which are unquestionable. But even here such recitals cause the listener uneasiness and repugnance. When Samson rent the young lion that roared against him, as he would have rent a kid, "he told not his father or his mother what he had done." The reticence of noble minds forbids parade. The truly heroic seek no occasion to relate their triumphs. We are told that the Earl of Cardi-

gan could rarely be induced to mention the brilliant charge of the Light Brigade which he so gallantly led. Real greatness regards its most memorable doings as being only natural, and not as exceptional things to be talked about. Whatever degree of fact the habit of boasting may imply or exclude, it is universally felt to be unbecoming and disgraceful.

More, we instinctively discern in this vain-gloriousness something beyond bad taste. The ancients held that the gods were specially provoked by it, and that it was never long before they inflicted humiliation upon the strutting offender. We, too, instinctively perceive that at bottom it is a moral fault. That it almost necessarily implies injustice to others is manifest. Thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, magnifying ourselves in the extravagant rhetoric of conceit and vanity, our compeers soon dwindle in our eyes, and we treat them accordingly. This is apparent in the intellectual realm. Robert Louis Stevenson writes a friend, "I was delighted to hear the good news about ——. Bravo, he goes uphill fast. Let him beware of vanity, and he will go higher; let him still be discontented, and let him (if it might be) see the merits and not the

faults of his rivals, and he may swarm at last to the top-gallant. There is no other way. Admiration is the only road to excellence, and the critical spirit kills; but envy and injustice are putrefaction at its feet." Our Lord taught us how disastrously this spirit of self-glorification works in the moral life. "He spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at nought" (Luke xviii. 9). The natural effect of self-exaltation is that we despise our neighbour; and having formed a mean estimate of him, the next thing is that we wrong him. In all spheres self-inflation is pernicious. The swaggerer is an unlovely character whose braggadocio is nauseating, and whose action is unsocial. "Glorious (boastful) men," writes Lord Bacon, "are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own vaunts." They are more. Revelation shows that at the root of vaingloriousness works the guilty pride which defies Heaven itself and ruins angels and men.

How opposite this temper is to the godliness of the Old Testament, and to the spirit of Christ in the New, is a point we need not labour. Our Lord consistently contended for reality, truth,

sincerity, modesty. In Him divine greatness solicitously veiled itself, as indeed is its wont. No boasting word fell from His lip; and when from time to time He lays claim to grandest attributes and offices, we feel that we are not listening to swelling words of vanity, but to the natural expression of supreme greatness. His constant effort was to withdraw Himself from observation and popularity. His indignation was fired most of all by the trumpet of the Pharisee. Darwin alleges that such is the vanity of the peacock that he will, in the absence of other spectators, drag his bejewelled train before swine. The passion of ostentation was similarly developed in the Pharisee, who made broad his phylactery, and ingeniously sought to dazzle the crowd. This habit specially aroused the wrath of the Master. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." The essential spirit of Christianity finds here its deepest, truest expression.

St. Paul was in entire harmony with the spirit of his Master. His view of the heinousness of self-flattery finds strong and repeated expression. Treating of the depravity of the Gentiles, he convicts them of this vice. "In-

solent, haughty, boastful" (Rom. i. 30). Anticipating the approaching age, he writes: "For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty" (2 Tim. iii. 2). He classes the habit of glorying with the darkest sins, the braggarts with the worst of sinners. Bluster is generally regarded as the sign of an inferior type of character, sufficiently chastised by a smile or sneer; but the apostle reprobates as a profound moral fault what we dismiss as a mere infirmity. His view of the becoming temper is in exact accord with the mind of Christ. "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3).

Yet in our text St. Paul, seemingly at least, indulges in the very temper strongly denounced by our Lord, and which elsewhere the apostle himself so severely condemns. The tenth and eleventh chapters of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians appear a very paroxysm of boasting. "For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority, I shall not be put to shame" (x. 8). "What we are in word

by letters when we are absent, such are we also indeed when we are present" (x. 11). "Not glorying beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labours" (x. 15). "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (xi. 5). "As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia" (xi. 10). "Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also" (xi. 18). "Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also" (xi. 21). And he proceeds to speak of himself in language of strongest self-eulogy. Verse after verse enumerates points on which he claims superiority. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more" (xi. 23). "I will not glory, save in my weaknesses" (xi. 30). He boasts of his labours, authority, genealogy, sacrifices, sufferings. As we intimate, these chapters are little more than an outburst of prodigious boasting; and in not a few places beside does the apostle claim for himself distinctions which invest him with solitary glory. Not only is he not behind the very chiefest apostles, he surpasses them. A cursory reader of his letters might easily mistake the vehement self-vindication for a jarring note in the high music. For the solution

of this paradox let us remind ourselves of the following considerations.

First, it must be remembered that boasting springs from the fundamental consciousness that we are essentially great, and that only great conduct becomes us. Our glorying may be devoid of fact and proportion, it may contain elements utterly unworthy; yet at last it originates in the sense of the greatness of humanity, and in the persuasion that nothing small or mean befits it. If we suspect that we have not acted nobly or greatly, we affect the greatness we do not possess. Guilty boasting is a false expression of the innate consciousness of the dignity of human nature; the consciousness which, when rightly cherished and expressed, gives birth to all that is best in character and action. When mentioning the ferocious aspect that African tribes are accustomed to assume, Livingstone remarks, "The constant habit of wearing arms is probably only a substitute for the courage they do not possess." Yet the habit of wearing their war-paint indicates their sense of what they ought to be, and how they ought to acquit themselves as heroes. The brave words, the courtly ceremonies, the polished manners of civilized men

are often only substitutes for missing virtues, yet even then they declare our high ideal of ourselves, and our feeling for something like dignified conduct. Napoleon, whilst in exile at St. Helena, yet preserved the symbols and ceremonies of his departed greatness. None of his attendants came into his presence without being summoned. None spoke to him first. At dinner he was served in great state, on gold and silver plate, and waited on by his servants in a rich livery of green and gold. It was the shadow of royalty without its substance. So, in "the present distress," we retain the consciousness of powers and prerogatives we no longer possess; yet in curious ways we betray the memory of lost rank and glory, and our high and mighty boasting is one of the hollow devices by which we deceive ourselves concerning lost realities. However we may scorn the vapourings of the vain, we must not forget that their imaginary greatness is the wild, flaunting flower of a noble root capable of glorious fruition.

Again, we may remind ourselves that the Christian creed does not enjoin upon its disciples a false humility which is prepared to accept injustice without protest. To stand up for ourselves when we can truthfully do so, and

fearlessly vindicate our conduct and claims when challenged, is a natural virtue which the doctrine of Christ does nothing to discourage. One of Nietzsche's chapters treats "Of virtue that maketh smaller." Here he proceeds to impugn the Christian world for its submissiveness, yielding, and cowardice; he argues that it has made the monkish virtues of moderation, passivity, non-assertion, and non-resistance so long its ideal, that it is now the victim of a dreary sentimentalism. "They are lacking in clenched fists; their fingers know not how to hide themselves behind fists. For them, virtue is what maketh modest and tame. Thereby they have made the wolf a dog, and man himself man's best domestic animal. . . . Too much sparing, too much yielding—thus it is your soil! But for the purpose of growing high, a tree will twist hard roots round hard rocks. Throw not away the hero in thy soul." This impeachment fails. Though St. Paul might not "prove his doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks," he knew how to take care of himself in all situations, and to do so effectually. He showed that the Christian poverty of spirit does not signify meanness of spirit. In this letter to the Corinthians he proves convincingly

that saints are not altogether devoid of clenched fists and the ability to use them; or, in other words, he demonstrates that they have both the disposition and resolution to do themselves justice very frankly and vigorously. There is nothing abject in the Christian faith, or, if properly instructed, in the Christian disciple. St. Paul's adversaries had good reason to know that he had not thrown away the hero in his soul, and those who to-day are best acquainted with the average Christian will be the last to accuse him of a lack of militancy. Self-contempt may be a disease of mankind, as Nietzsche affirms, but the Christian does not suffer from it.

Another lesson taught by the apostle is, that self-respect and self-justification are perfectly consistent with genuine humility. He prefaces this section of his letter, in which he fearlessly vindicates his honour, by a touching confession. "Now I Paul myself intreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you" (2 Cor. x. 1). It is comparatively easy to cherish a passive spirit or a militant one, but to blend the two in equal proportion is the triumph of ethical life. By the grace of the Lord Jesus the

apostle wrought this triumph, mingling a rare graciousness with masculine courage. A famous scientist has told us of the radiant energy of the dewdrop. It appears that the trembling silver holds within itself in no small degree the powerful and quenchless element known as radium; so he who possesses the mind of Christ attains the delicate poise where strength and gentleness complete each other, as sublime energy and poetic grace blend in the dew of the morning.

A legitimate place for boasting exists, and it remains that we carefully consider the situation of St. Paul so that we may understand the justice and necessity of his glorying. At the very time when this epistle was being written, a gifted Greek was living who bequeathed to posterity a charming essay entitled, "How one can praise oneself without exciting envy." Of course the two writers knew nothing of each other, they had little in common, they approached the subject from widely different standpoints, and it is therefore very interesting to note how far the apostle's action in this matter agrees with the independent reasoning of the philosopher. The fact is that in this essay Plutarch writes St. Paul's Apologia. It might

almost seem that the philosopher was acquainted with the argument of St. Paul, for at a dozen points the essay closely fits the apostle's position and specifically confirms his reasoning. It will, however, only be possible for us to notice a few of its salient contentions.

After rebuking those who trumpet their own glory, Plutarch proceeds, " And yet, in spite of all this, there are occasions when a statesman may venture to speak in his own praise, not to cry up his own glory and merit, but when the time and matter demand that he should speak the truth about himself, as he would about another ; especially when it is mentioned that another has done good and excellent things, there is no need for him to suppress the fact that he has done as well. For such self-praise bears excellent fruit, since much more and better praise springs from it as from seed. For the statesman does not ask for reputation as a reward or consolation, nor is he merely pleased at its attending upon his actions, but he values it because credit and character give him opportunities to do good on a larger scale." How exactly this defines the situation and spirit of St. Paul ! By denying his apostolic authority and mission, and by sneering at his personal

infirmities, his enemies sought to destroy his influence for good. If his ministry was to retain its efficacy, it was imperative that he should state the truth concerning himself. He recounted his labours, enumerated his successes, spoke in his own praise, not to cry up his own glory and merit, but because the time and matter demanded that he should speak the truth about himself, as he would about another. Especially when it was attempted to depreciate him by extolling others who had done good and excellent things, there was no need for him to suppress the fact that he had done as well, or better. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft." And most certainly he did not seek reputation as a reward or consolation; but entirely because credit and character gave him opportunity to do good, to do good upon an ever-enlarging scale, he asserted his integrity.

Again, Plutarch writes, "Self-praise cannot be blamed, if it is an answer to some charge or calumny, as those words of Pericles, 'And yet you are angry with such a man as me, a man, I take it, inferior to no one either in knowledge

of what should be done, or in ability to point out the same, and a lover of my country to boot, and superior to bribes.' For not only did he avoid all swagger and vainglory and ambition in talking thus loftily about himself, but he also exhibited the spirit and greatness of his virtue, which could abase and crush envy because it could not be abased itself." Precisely the line of St. Paul's defence against the adversaries who charged him with mercenary and ambitious designs. He was inferior to none either in knowledge of the subjects in question, or in ability to apply his knowledge. "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I" (2 Cor. xi. 22). "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God" (Acts xxii. 3). No man better knew the Jewish religion or its bearings than did he, and none could expound it with greater lucidity and power. All his contemporaries were conscious that he spoke with the authority of profound knowledge and mastery. He was a lover of his country to boot. "For I could wish that I myself were anathema from

Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 3-5). More sublime patriotism was never felt or uttered. And he was superior to bribes. He loved his nation, he loved the Church of Christ, with a pure affection, his hands were unsoiled by bribes of any order. He could truthfully declare the purity and magnanimity of his career; and in talking thus loftily about himself he had in view no personal pride or interest, but he exhibited his unselfish conduct and transparent method that he might crush the envy that threatened his usefulness through clouding his character.

"Not less," continues Plutarch, "but still more, lawful is it for a public man who is wronged to speak on his own behalf to those who treat him with ingratitude. This it was that made Demosthenes' freedom of speech splendid, and prevented people being wearied out by the praise which in all his speech 'On the Crown' he lavished on himself, pluming himself on those

embassies and decrees in connexion with the war with which fault had been found." How vividly this expresses the motive and mood of St. Paul, smarting under the consciousness of the ingratitude of men for whose sake he had suffered many things! Deeply wronged by those who had treated him with base ingratitude, it was alike lawful and expedient that he should defend himself against cruel calumny. He had a right to be maintained by the Church to which he rendered such illustrious service, but this right he waived. "If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 12). "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more" (ix. 19). He had an overwhelming claim to be honoured by the whole Church of God, so great were his sacrifices, so splendid his services, and yet by many of his brethren he was treated with suspicion and grave injustice. In the light of this fact, according to the canon of Plutarch, the great apostle with a bleeding heart was wholly justified in maintaining his reputation and influence by exhibiting his

noble virtue. If Demosthenes' freedom of speech was allowed, and the people prevented from being wearied out by the praise he lavished on himself, because of the wisdom and patriotism of the great orator's statesmanship, is not St. Paul's glorying legitimate and admirable as a defence against calumny, and as an incitement to others to emulate his enthusiasm? Surely it was his duty to review his manifold renunciations, not with the design of magnifying himself, but that he might put to shame them who wronged the gospel by dishonouring him.

In praising themselves, as Plutarch also points out, noble men are careful to eulogize their associates; and they also contrive to exhibit themselves and their doings in such a light as to excite their hearers to a similar ambition. The readers of St. Paul's letters know well that he never seeks to magnify himself at the expense of others, but with unfeigned joy boasts of the charity, bravery, and services of his brethren, and never does he recall his personal devotion and achievements without seeking to incite others to emulate his example.

Plutarch again remarks, "And not only on one's trial and in danger, but also in misfortune, is tall talk and boasting more suitable than in

prosperity. For in prosperity people seem to clutch as it were at glory and enjoy it, and so gratify their ambition; but in adversity, being far from ambition owing to circumstances, such self-commendation seems to be a bearing up and fortifying the spirit against fortune, and an avoidance altogether of that desire for pity and condolence, and that humility, which we often find in adversity." Never do we find St. Paul indulging in self-laudation in the days of success and popularity, pluming himself on his merits and victories; whenever he recounts his service and sacrifice he is on the defensive, it is in the dark day when adversity, persecution, and calumny compel self-defence. In the hour and article of recognition and applause he is the humblest of men. He never clutches at glory and enjoys it.

"In Demosthenes' speech 'On the Crown' he most artistically inserts praise of his audience in the remarks about himself, and so makes his speech less egotistical and less likely to raise envy," observes Plutarch. Paul is profuse in his acknowledgments of the love, liberality, and zeal of the Churches; and if not so artistic as Demosthenes, he is certainly as sincere. "For if in anything I have gloried to Titus on

your behalf, I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also, which I made before Titus, was found to be truth" (2 Cor. vii. 14). And so the apostle seizes every opportunity to extol the congregation. Indeed he often seems to impute to his brethren much that impartial judges would have credited to himself.

Again the essayist explains, "As people anxious not to injure those who have weak eyes, draw a shade over too much light, so some people make their praise of themselves less glaring and absolute, by pointing out some of their small defects, or miscarriages, or errors, and so remove all risk of making people offended or envious." With what freedom does the apostle refer to his various frailties! "Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time: and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected" (Gal. iv. 13). "I came unto you not with excellency of speech or of wisdom. . . . And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 1-3). The apostle so freely admits his physical, linguistic, and oratorical defects, that it seems quite possible that we have formed

an exaggerated estimate of them. In painting his own portrait he has made the warts conspicuous enough. We never feel that he wished to represent himself as a paragon. He is anxious to show what divine truth and grace have done through him in spite of his personal limitations.

"Moreover, it is not amiss sometimes to awe and repress and take down and tame the impudent and bold, to boast and talk a little big about oneself," continues Plutarch. How proper this was for St. Paul is abundantly clear, and not less clear also how easy it was for him to do so. To set his prodigious activity and achievements in contrast with the futility of his carping critics was to crush them. "He is full of irony, inexorable, biting irony. His sayings quiver like a sword-blade." Great men are so valuable to the race that they do us an additional service when they wither the vain detractors who threaten to obscure their character and jeopardise their mission.

With another quotation from the Greek we must content ourselves. "Those that are compelled to praise themselves do so less offensively if they do not ascribe all the honour to themselves, but, being aware that their glory will be

tiresome to others, set it down partly to fortune, partly to the deity. Excellently did Pytho of Ænos, in coming forward after a victory, and saying, 'Men of Athens, this is the doing of one of the gods, I only put my hands to the work.'" The piety commended by Plutarch is seen in its utmost truth and purity in St. Paul. "But by the grace of God I am what I am. . . . I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10). He gloried in his Master, extolled His grace, laid every trophy at His feet. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. ix. 23, 24). As St. Paul points out more than once, this is the appropriate sphere of boasting: "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17). In His truth, righteousness, and love; in His grace, kingdom, and coming. This was the atmosphere that the apostle breathed. He felt

himself as nothing; from God was the power, to God was the glory. "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7). He did not set down his success "partly to fortune, partly to the Deity," but gave the whole glory to God; so does St. Paul's glorying cease to be irksome, for it is not incense burnt to himself, but sweet incense burnt to His glory, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

As already observed, the love of glory primarily springs out of our essential nature, and when duly qualified brings forth precious fruits. Lord Bacon has shown its high use in civil affairs; how in commanders and soldiers it is an essential quality, how in cases of great enterprise "a composition of glorious natures doth put life into business," and how even in the fame of learning "the flight will be slow without some feathers of ostentation." Yet only when the grace of God has free course and is magnified does this passion appear lovely, benign, altogether blessed. Then it is no longer self-exculpation and eulogy, strictly speaking, it becomes a vindication of ourselves as the

servants of humanity. Purged of the grossness of egotism, inspired by the genius of charity, contemplating magnanimous deeds and sacrifices, as we see in the apostle, glorying becomes sublime. It is no personal panegyric, but a vindication of ourselves as the servants of God. We are concerned for His honour, magnify His grace, contend not for selfish pleasure or gain, but for His rights and the establishment of His reign. Here vainglory becomes true, solid, eternal glory. In the proportion in which we love and serve God, in the love and service of humanity have we justification for the consciousness of greatness, for glowing enthusiasm, for pomp of achievement, and for the large speech of wonder, admiration, exultation, prophecy.

A foreign newspaper a while ago thus praised English moderation of expression: "The English language reflects some national idiosyncrasies, such as the Englishman's abstention from exaggerated praise, and his consequent dislike of superlative terms." Whilst, however, reserve may have its merit, yet is there a need in our nature and plenty of scope in life for largeness, grandeur, enthusiasm, and the poetry of description and eulogy. Happy are we if we

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gratify this instinct on right lines, in a wise spirit, to a worthy end. Happy are we if we can boast of the grace of God not bestowed upon us in vain : conscious of the excellence of the principles which regulate us, of the merit of our character and conduct, and conscious also of the divine inworking by virtue of which we are what we are ; all unassuming in ourselves, but conscious of royalty in Him at whose feet we lay our crown. Happy are we when able to boast of a Christian country ; of one acknowledging the divine authority, one ruled with His glory for its guiding star : not vain of our fatherland because it is rich, powerful, or immense ; but proud of it because of its justice, righteousness, charity. The patriotism of the City of God. Happy are we when we can honestly boast of our Church : not seeking to reflect glory upon ourselves through our connexion with a rich or popular organization, but because we belong to a band of men whose heart God has touched ; not glorying in the spirit of a narrow denominationalism, but in the fact that our Church reflects so much of the likeness of its Master. Thus the instinct of boasting attains its ideal.

IN PRAISE OF ECSTASY

"Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit."—Eph. v. 18.

NUMEROUS passages in the writing of St. Paul show his familiarity with the spectacle of intemperance, and also that he regarded the habit with abhorrence. It is mentioned only to be branded. In these days excess in wine is sometimes condoned as being little more than an indiscretion into which men are betrayed by genial feeling on festive occasions; the apostle never regards it in this light, never refers to it apologetically or humorously, but invariably stigmatizes it as shameful. The gay temper of Omar Khayyám is far as the poles asunder from the spirit of St. Paul. "They that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober" (1 Thess. v. 7, 8). He classes "drunkenness, revellings,

and such like," with the foulest vices (Gal. v. 21). "I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Cor. v. 11). Immediately upon this follows the admonition that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God (vi. 10). However graced by beauty, smothered by roses, lulled by flutes, ministered in golden cups, and ravished by dance and chorus, the phosphorescence of debauch did not blind the apostle to the corruption. The orgiastic feasts of the pagan, however invested with purple light, were absolutely contrary to the purity of the Master he followed and to the doctrine he taught. Yet in the passage standing at the head of this chapter, where St. Paul once more emphatically reprobates inebriety, he hardly concludes as we should expect. It might have been anticipated that in naming the wild hilariousness of the heathen banquet, he would embrace the opportunity to guard the Christian congregation against the dangerousness of every kind of excitement and ecstasy. It seemed just the place and moment for ascetic counsel, showing the extreme peril of any indulgence of

feeling bearing the most distant likeness to intoxication. But so far from such expostulation, the apostle enjoins one form of passionate enjoyment as the substitute for another. So far from interdicting the glowing festival, he simply changes the wine.

Little reflection is, however, needed to show how accurately the apostle gauged the situation, and how wise and just was the counsel he tenders.

The craving for excitement is universal, a veritable impulse of our essential nature. Creatures in all the lower ranges of life reveal this appetite. Travellers in the southern world tell of trees whose nectar puts bird and insect into a state of delightful agitation. The green and golden butterflies are for ever fluttering and quivering about the gay blossoms; and when driven away, after a moment's airy flight they return to the feast, quivering with eagerness for the limpid sweetness. The birds also become flushed with excitement. "Every tree is a fair, and all behave accordingly, chirping and whistling, humming and buzzing, flitting and fluttering, in the unrestrained gaiety of holiday and feast-day humour." Stimulated by the quintessence of the flowers, birds, butter-

flies, and bees are beside themselves with gladness. Truly "the tenses of intoxication are infinite"; but the elevated mood is rarely so innocent as here. In some measure the whole animal world partakes of it. Savage races escape from the gloom and terror of existence by wild entertainments. Not a tribe but has discovered some kind of distillation, giving itself up periodically to liquor, dances, devil-music, and mad festivity.

Public carnival and private carouse have persisted through generations in civilized society. Israel celebrated joyous feasts, which too often degenerated into revelry. "They lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; they chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; they drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments" (Amos vi. 4-6). History gives lurid insight into the banqueting-halls of Babylon, Egypt, and Nineveh; whilst the gross saturnalia of Greece and Rome have been depicted by the poets who glorified them and the moralists who denounced them. The North debauched itself with mead; the East

dreamed its splendid dreams drugged by opium. The institutions of conviviality still flourish, and in viands more or less legitimate we become oblivious of the weight of a weary world; we hasten to see visions, to enjoy sensations, to taste delights which transcend the grey experiences of ordinary existence. As Balzac notes, "Mankind at large is carried away by fits of intoxication." There is, then, in humanity an insatiable, undying craving for excitement: for a truce from care that ordinary life does not give, for gratifications more acute than those supplied by normal circumstance, for sensations seldom experienced, for a consciousness of greatness, opulence, power, and felicity rarely if ever supplied by actual life. At the bottom, in our subconsciousness, lurks the conviction that we were destined to dignities and delights beyond the prosaic life we are compelled to live; and in anodynes and stimulants, in gala days and "high fantastical" moods and measures, we seek to recover the paradise somehow missed. In wine the slave is a god, rags become velvet, misery is drowned in voluptuous jollity, the coward glows into a conqueror, the hungry are satiated, the pauper is a prince, and long fretted on every side by the cir-

cumscriptions of law the "elevated" are emancipated into glorious liberty. They are distracted in a paradise of imaginings; it may be a fool's paradise, but its magic appeals to instincts deep in the soul, although the occasion of illusion is found in the appetites and agitations of the flesh.

Once more, St. Paul recognizes the truth of human nature. He does not attempt to uproot the instinct so deeply implanted and universally active; he does not deny needs and longings which so vividly assert themselves; he opens up a sphere for the legitimate satisfaction of a long misunderstood and misdirected passion. For the unclean cup of sorcery he substitutes a sacramental chalice. It is instructive to recall how the spectators of Pentecost thought they discerned in the excited disciples the phenomena of intoxication. "And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. But Peter lifted up his voice, saying, These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts ii. 12-16). A new order of fellowship, eloquence, mirthful-

ness, rapture was being inaugurated. Whilst the primal impulse to ecstatic emotion, speech, and joyfulness was legitimate and sublime, the method of its gratification had hitherto been, as a rule, false as hell; but at length the secret of true rest and rapture was being revealed in the unction of the Holy One. "They are filled with new wine." How false as intended, and yet substantially how true! Wine still, only new wine. Henceforth men need not to be mocked with wine in which was surfeit, with all its attendant disillusionment and degradation; in the "wine of the kingdom," in the gifts, powers, inspirations, and sanctifications of the Holy Spirit, they would find all, and infinitely more than all, vainly sought in Bacchanalian excess.

Archæologists are inclined to believe that the Christian temple has been evolved from a tomb, that the cathedral was first a mausoleum. Truly a marvellous transfiguration! The narrow cell swelling into the spacious dome; the shroud replaced by the rich robes of choristers and priests; the silence chased by glorious music; dust and ashes glowing into beauty; and the awful gloom banished by the rainbow lights of jewelled glass. Wonderful, indeed, is

the evolution that transforms a feculent sepulchre into a cathedral, with its amplitudes, quires, aisles, solemn pageants, and triumphant jubilees. Yet this marvellous uplift is only the symbol of a host of elevations and transfigurations wrought by Christianity; and among its many ennoblements none is more wonderful than its sanctification of the principle of festivity, its conversion of the symposium of the cultured and the wassail of the vulgar into the beauty and purity of a sacrament. The craving for glorious thought and sentiment, for radiant vision and splendid utterance, for thrills of the flesh, for all that breathes in poetry, soars in song, laughs in convivialism, fully satisfied within the natural life hallowed by the Spirit of God.

But note, with its express sanction of exuberance of imagination and emotion, revelation consistently emphasizes two things. First, such transport is ever qualified by reason. Nothing kindred with the black magic of heathen *séances* is retained or perpetuated by Christianity. It rejects the tripod of the sibyl; the afflatus of wine, the intoxication of opium, the delirium of reeling dervish, are abhorrent to its sober purity; it is most chary in conceding space for vision,

dream, or trance. It tolerates neither the exasperations of debauchery, nor the fantastic moods of spiritual inebriety. Its service throughout is reasonable. Consider the treatment by St. Paul of "visions and revelations" in the twelfth chapter of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, and its restraint and reticence are strikingly indicative of the sanity of the apostle and of the faith he preached. He experienced a mystic ascent to heaven, and heard from the Lord words, not which were "unspeakable," but which he will not repeat.[1] How easy is it to imagine with what extravagance those words would have been travestied by an enthusiast of any other faith who may be supposed to have heard them! Taking the chapter as a whole, the mingling of the mystical and the practical, the ecstatic and the restrained, is simply marvellous. The sublimest rapture is not allowed to escape the boundary of the intelligible. In the twelfth and two following chapters of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians we mark the sound sense of the apostle in dealing with a dangerous subject. "Without absolutely denying the reality of the gift of tongues, he makes on this subject reflections which are equivalent

[1] Gardner, *Religious Experience of St. Paul.*

to blaming it," is the comment of Renan. It is nearer the truth to say that whilst he accepts the ecstasy which found this expression, he is anxious to preserve it from the abuse to which it was liable by excited and ill-balanced brains. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (40). How far away is this reasonableness from the spectacles of excess attending the oracles of heathendom! In the heart of this discussion of the nature and uses of these extraordinary gifts and agitations occurs the lyric on love so profound and delicate that the most sceptical are charmed; and at its conclusion follows the sublime argument on the resurrection which, like its own trumpet, awakens the soul to the immortality so surely ours. The modesty of nature, the moderation of reason, confines and controls the intensest rapture of the Christian life. Ecstasy often made St. Paul a poet, never a fanatic.

Secondly, the transport of the saint is ever ethical. A recent number of the Review called *The Quest* contains an article entitled "Ecstasy in Islam." The writer of this observes: "Neither

deep learning in divinity, nor devotion to good works, nor ascetic ardour, nor moral purity, makes a Mohammedan a saint; he may have all or none of these things, but the only indispensable qualification is that rapture and ecstasy which is the outward sign of 'passing away' from the conscious self." Christianity knows nothing of any swooning out of moral purity and good works. Again, this writer adds: "It must be borne in mind that this is a theory of perfection (the ignoring of evil), and that those whom it exalts above the law are saints, spiritual guides, and profound theosophists who enjoy the special favour of God, and presumably do not need to be restrained, coerced, or punished. Practically, of course, it leads in many instances to antinomianism and libertinism, as among the Bektâshîs and other orders of the so-called 'lawless' dervishes. The same theories produced the same results in Europe during the Middle Ages, and the impartial historian cannot ignore the corruptions to which a purely subjective mysticism is liable; but on the present occasion I am concerned with the rose itself rather than with its cankers." The New Testament exalts none above the law, exempts none from its claims; this particular rose does not

grow in its garden, and it is not therefore responsible for its cankers. In the thought of St. Paul no fervour of enthusiasm, no licence of poetry, no red-letter day of fellowship, no crisis of passion and panic, absolve from the restraints of reason and purity. He has a horror of the wild excesses of pagan (1 Cor. xii. 2) and Christian ecstasy (1 Cor. xiv. 23) indulged in by unrestrained crowds. "He could not have exerted his great influence if the fires of mysticism had consumed away the ethical element in him. But the ethos in his case stood the ordeal of fire. The Pauline fellowship of Christ is no magic transformation, nor is it an orgy of enthusiasts who are left mere yawning sluggards when the transport is over. St. Paul himself subordinated ecstasy to ethos (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3)."[1] No decoction of poppy or lotus, no fiery distillation, no lashing of the mind into frenzy, no epidemic of fanaticism will justify us in a hair's-breadth violation of wisdom and virtue; we must therefore refrain from every exercise and indulgence that would jeopardize the sanity and serenity of the soul.

Yet, with all this, there is no real denial of gratification to our manifold nature. Within

[1] Deissmann, *St. Paul.*

the compass of sober reason and austere virtue the vast volume of our physical, intellectual, and æsthetic being is satisfied. A glance at the chapter whence our text is taken reveals the extent to which the Holy Spirit acts on the soul of the faithful, satisfying all their desire, making the cup of life to overflow. "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns." The faith of Christ does not chill the imagination, only kindles it with purer fire. The language of poetry is the large utterance of passion and aspiration, of the vision and faculty divine; and it is sober truth to affirm that the native speech of the saints in their great hours is lyrical. "And spiritual songs." The glowing outbursts of a swelling heart. In Eckermann's *Conversations of Goethe*, the great poet complains, "It is strange that with all I have done, there is not one of my poems that would suit the Lutheran hymn-book." No, the note of the celestial is lacking in the poetry of the natural man; however high in intellectual character, it is yet grosser music. Goethe did not sing the song of Christ's Church because he did not know its secret. Under the influence of wine the tongue is loosened; and under the influence of the Spirit of holiness and grace the tongue becomes

a tongue of fire, in rhythmic speech telling out the wonders of God's love. Whatever may be said of the hymnology of the Christian Church, it is there that the soul finds its highest expression, and the best secular song constantly borrows its language. The Redeemer entered our world with a burst of heavenly music, and every age since that has seen Him freshly manifested to the race was accompanied by a notable revival of song. It was eminently so in the primitive Church. The jubilant strain broke out irrepressibly around the cradle of Protestantism. And the Evangelical Revival so far proved its authenticity that it was also a revival of music and singing. Christ is never revealed in an age or a soul without unsealing fountains of fresh feeling. "Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Every string vibrates with melodious joy. Music finds its noblest office in rendering the unutterable peace and hope of the Christian heart.

All the genial and delightsome elements of our nature are evoked by the Spirit, fostered by Him, perfected by Him. He secures to us the rapture of the heart. How sharp and sad the contrast that often exists between the mind and the circumstances of the natural man! Out-

wardly all is gay, whilst inwardly is the torture of the restless mind and bleeding heart. If the contrast were made visible, the feast of roses would be anything but a pleasant sight. We are told of a medical student whose vivid imagination realized to painfulness the anatomy of those with whom he had dealings. Under the peach flesh and behind the velvet gaze of beauty he was constrained to see the outlined skull and the empty darkness of the void orbits, until he was compelled to abandon his profession. Suppose that we possessed the penetrating gaze to look beyond the surface gaiety of the vain to their interior mind and heart, how should we be startled to discover beneath the signs of hilarity satiety, vexation, disgust, and despair! The intoxications of sense do not assuage the troubles of the mind, the stings of conscience, the bitterness of the soul; but the Holy Spirit makes the heart His harp, or, in other words, resolves those interior discords which turn life into a tragedy whatever may be the propitiousness of circumstance, and fills the days with a sweet music that the most unfriendly environment cannot silence. The satisfaction sought by the natural man in the spectacles of the stage, in the vanities of fashion,

in the stimulus of indulgence, springs up instinctively in the pure in heart, with or without the advantages of fortune.

The saint enjoys the *fullness* of rapture. History records that Alexander the Great offered a prize to the man who could drink most wine, and that thirty candidates died in the process of the competition. No matter how we may drain the cup of earthly indulgence, we still expire unsatisfied. No snatch of sensual ecstasy, no throb of worldly joy, no dream of power or glow of success can fill the spaciousness of the soul. "Be ye filled with the Spirit." As the heaven is filled with light, as ocean's rocky cup is brimmed with the shining tides, so does the Spirit of God pervade the infinity of the soul, and every true believer expresses the sparkle of the sky, the music of the sea. The reason alleged for the rejection of religion is that we want life in its fullness. Precisely what the faith of Christ gives.

Let it not be supposed that we are treating of a mystical frenzy quite apart from the common practical life of mankind. Whatever concerns our habitual doing and experience, under the influence of the Spirit becomes a source of uncommon joy and jubilation. Every daily

duty, every object of study, the interchanges of friendship, the variations of fortune, the succession of the seasons, at each and every turn we find motive and opportunity for wonder, delight, and praise. "Giving thanks always for all things." When a lady in the hearing of Constable called an engraving ugly, the great artist replied, "No, madam, there is nothing ugly; I never saw an ugly thing in my life." To men of imagination everything is ideal. The beautiful mind sees beauty everywhere; the musical mind detects harmonies in blacksmiths' hammers and shepherds' pipings; the poetic mind is frenzied with the flower of the grass which peasants trample. Men of this quality do not need to idealize things, they are already ideal; no need for further transfiguration, they are already transfigured: fine souls see things as they are, and nothing is mean or ugly. So to the spiritual all is spiritual, to the pure all is pure, to the thankful all is precious, to the great soul all life is redeemed by the sense of greatness, glory, gladness.

The *permanence* of rapture is the heritage of the pure. The salient characteristic of sensual pleasure is its fugitiveness. The spasm of fleshly intoxication is quickly over; it is a

fever, a delirium, soon forgotten in painful reactions. The joy of the Lord is a perennial festival. It may seem tame in comparison with the loudness and garishness of the feasts of the senses; yet, as the poet sings,

> A quiet hope that keeps its household seat
> Is better than recurrent glories fleet.

In all this is seen the folly and falsity of the charge so often repeated by the enemies of the Christian faith, that it reduces human nature to insipidity and robs life of colour and sparkle. Frequently, confidently is this scoff reiterated; yet in the light of facts how absurd it is! The modern humanist keeps on crying aloud, Be true to man! be true to the body! be true to earth! But surely these cries are borrowed from revelation; only revelation shows that we cannot be true to man unless we are first true to God, nor true to the body unless first true to the soul, nor true to earth unless first true to heaven. Here is the whole philosophy of the situation; and when we accept the *whole* philosophy, we know the fullness of joy and the pleasures which are for evermore. The faith of Christ is closely true to the human. It ignores no fundamental faculty or hunger. Far from suppressing any capacity or yearning of our

manifold being, it opens fresh fields of gratification, and empowers to wide liberty of intensified delights. Only it delivers appetite from the pandemonium of lawlessness, and introduces it into the realm of decency, dignity, and discipline, where alone pleasure becomes worthy of its name. It expels the serpent from the flowers, extracts the poison from the cup, and from the festival of life abolishes the dance of death. If the revilers of the Christian doctrine who regard with envious eyes the sottishness of pagan holidays honestly put that doctrine to the proof, they would find golden chords added to the lyre, new roses blowing of rare perfume, and in the sky the light of seven days.

Think of the rich average experience of one who walks with God! The carnal critic with no experience of Christian truth and privilege may presumptuously infer that the life of godliness is drear and abject; but the faithful eat bread of which he knows not, and drink the wine "which cheereth God and man." Philosophy may be divine; yet in the eyes of coarser humanity the philosopher appears drab and dull enough. Asked concerning the habits of Wordsworth, a peasant neighbour replied, "He has no habits; I never saw him with a

pipe or a mug in my life." The poet without these symbols of ecstasy appeared a poor creature in the reckoning of the village tippler. Accustomed to gross pleasures only, he regards with pity or contempt the superlative genius who lives in high thinking. Exactly in the same way are the godly despised by the carnal who do not know their secret. Filled with the Spirit of God, that is, filled with pureness and strength, with love and peace and hope, the saint is conscious of divine delectations all the more real because inexpressible, and which put him wholly beyond the criticism of the sensual.

What special seasons, too, of vision and entrancement are vouchsafed to godly men! If the worldling has memorable moments, hours, days of surpassing sensation, the spiritual are not behind him in such memories, and far beyond him in the quality of what they remember. Moses adjures Israel to be faithful to the commandments, concluding with the promise, "that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, upon the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth." "As the days of the heavens!" At once multiplied and memorable. Every spiritual man

knows these privileged seasons in which he surpasses himself, and, caught up into Paradise, is not sure whether he is in the body or out of the body. If, however, he is not in the seventh heaven, the seventh heaven is in him. Andrew Bonar confesses, "I often cannot give praise or thanks in any words but those of such songs as 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.'" And after these hallowed intoxications the saint cannot easily doubt either the spirituality of his nature or the glory that awaits him. He knows most about "red-letter days"; he travels through the years by the "all-red" route.

How excelling are Sabbatic joys and the exaltations of divine worship! It is a stale fashion to compare the Scotch Sabbath with the Parisian Sunday, much to the disadvantage of the former. The solemnity of the worshipping host is contrasted with the carnival of the gay city, and the devout are scorned for their austerity, pitied for their folly. How mistaken is this superciliousness! It is to judge the cathedral windows from the outside, where they seem only dark blots upon the glorious architecture. To behold the prismatic splendour of the apparent blackness we must enter the shrine, take our stand within, and only then does

the glory of the glass blaze out. The opinion of outsiders respecting the experiences of the Church of God is of little moment. God alone knows the deep peace, the holy gladness, the seraphic transport of the spiritualized multitude whilst

> Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
> And glory crowns the mercy-seat.

Here we realize ourselves in God, and language fails to express the awe and blessedness. "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high. Amen." Men to whom the universe is nothing more than whirling dust may mock at such rapture; yet is it a fact, and one of the most wonderful facts that philosophy is called upon to explain. The theatre with its tumult and glare is of the essence of vanity and vulgarity compared with the sweet reasonableness, the deep contentment, the exquisite delight, the soaring hope of the sacraments, psalms, and fellowship of the temple.

> O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem!
> By that sweet ornament which Truth doth give!

The faith of our Lord has brought into the lives of millions of lowly men and women a measure of holy joy that lifts them above the squalid conditions of ordinary circumstance, and that renders brutal delights hateful. They may often live in unlovely neighbourhoods and mean streets, their comrades perforce may be sensual, their tasks coarse, they may know only depressing associations and appointments; yet in the words of their Lord, in the grace of the Spirit, in the love of God and hope of His glory, the sordid environment is as though it were not, flowers spring about their feet, and they drink the spiced wine that leaves no regret. Where believers possess whatever this world can give, and are free to enjoy its utmost luxury, they are equally conscious of the superiority of the heavenly, and in the consolations and hopes of the higher life find their chief joy. The Church of the living God invites to a banquet infinitely more satisfying than animal surfeit—golden laughter, wine without dregs, the music of the skies: the whole sphere of rational felicity purged, multiplied, sublimated.

IN PRAISE OF FOLLY

" We are fools for Christ's sake."—1 Cor. iv. 10.

THROUGHOUT revelation foolishness is reprobated equally with wickedness; indeed, folly is a word continually used as a synonym for wickedness. Disobedience to the moral commandment is equivalent to playing the fool. In harmony with all the sacred writers, St. Paul enjoins practical wisdom, sharply rebuking those whose conduct is lacking in judgement and dignity. Thus the Ephesians are admonished. " Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise. . . . Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is " (v. 15-17). A witless, undignified deportment, resembling that of one who has too freely indulged in wine, is altogether unworthy of men professing godliness. Writing to Titus, he implies the obligation of the Christian to act with thoughtfulness and

circumspection. "We also were aforetime foolish" (iii. 3). He confesses that the believers were once senseless and disobedient; but through the kindness of God their Saviour their eyes were now opened, their senses exercised, and they walked according to the rule of reason and righteousness. And, finally, the apostle resents that he himself should be charged with folly. "I say again, Let no man think me a fool" (2 Cor. xi. 16). He was jealous of his reputation as a rational, self-respecting disciple of his great Master.

Yet just as distinctly does the apostle avow his readiness for Christ's sake to be accounted a fool. And let it be remembered here that we feel the dishonour of this imputation more perhaps than we feel any other. Generally speaking, men would rather be designated as sinners than as fools. To be classed as imbecile, our conduct branded as absurd, is to suffer the bitterest humiliation. If we suspect that such imputation possesses the faintest colour of truth, we are stung to the quick. Hence the force of the legal axiom, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel." Nevertheless, the apostle is ready to accept this odium. He has already borne much for Christ's sake, much that was

very hard to bear, and now he is prepared to bear this hardest thing of all. For his Master's sake he will wear the fool's cap, wear it proudly as a crown. He even invites others to share with him the disgrace that is also a glory. "If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18).

It is therefore necessary to consider on what grounds, and in what sense, the apostle was ready to suffer derision, and what was the nature of the apology that he offered for himself. This is all the more necessary, for it soon becomes evident that the points on which the sanity of the apostle was questioned are still urged against those who in modern times share the apostle's faith and zeal. The supercilious critics of to-day consider that the genuine, impassioned disciple of Christ is playing the part of a fanatic, and they do not hesitate to proclaim their view in the most contemptuous terms. What, then, were the specific grounds of the reproach heaped upon St. Paul, and to what extent is the opposition to Christianity still based on the same grounds? Let us specify three of these.

The primary ground of offence was found in

the fact that the apostle recognized as real a sphere that his critics altogether failed to discern; and that, in consequence, he accounted of supreme importance what to them was absolutely incredible. He thus states the situation: "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. ii. 14). One of the ancients has said, "That which is best is always hard to be found out, hard to be judged." But St. Paul not only perceived and judged what was best in the sensible world; he discerned the best and highest of a kingdom transcending the realm of the senses, he saw and felt the powers of a world that is the objective of man's highest life, his spiritual life. Therefore was he a fool in the reckoning of the materialistic leaders of thought, and his vehement preaching and painful sacrifices were preposterous in their eyes, because they failed to apprehend the heavenly vision which so completely dominated his thought and life. He saw what they did not see; heard what they did not hear; knew and felt what they had no conception of. "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's

wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth ; interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men." It has been said that if we could behold a ball-room without hearing the music to which the guests dance, we should conclude that we were watching a company of capering lunatics. The ancient world inferred that St. Paul and his companions were devoid of sense and sobriety, because it could not hear the celestial music whose measures the feet of the saints obeyed.

Yet, was the apostle, regulating his life and action by the consciousness of a higher universe, the pitiable victim of hallucination ? Nietzsche attempts to explain the sense of the supernatural as a consequence of idle mooning, best cured by practical life. " Idleness, or semi-idleness, is necessary to the true religious life. There are at present in Germany men of all classes whose activity has caused the disappearance of the religious instinct. They are so engrossed with business, pleasures, country, newspapers, and family duties, that they have no time for religion." This, alas ! is true enough ; but what does it prove ? Does it prove that there is no inborn religious faculty, with its corresponding objective ? Hardly that. Our philosopher is a mighty believer in art, and he is

perpetually trouncing the people for their excessive devotion to secular interests, lest by their gross pursuits they destroy their æsthetic instincts, becoming blind to beauty, deaf to music, dead to poetry. Is, then, the æsthetic faculty a mere superstition bred of idleness? The simple truth is that, whether the higher intuitions be intellectual or spiritual, they may be blurred and aborted by neglect or abuse. That health may be ruined is no argument against its being the normal state of physical, intellectual, or spiritual condition.

In all ages it has been the fate of genius to be judged as a species of madness, and by the mass accounted folly. Columbus was despised as a visionary. Palissy was tolerated with the smile of pity. Great musicians were reckoned amiable enthusiasts who wasted the paper on which they wrote immortal scores. Gordon was accounted half-crazed. Village wiseacres made Wordsworth the subject of contemptuous criticism. One said "that he had seen him wander about by night, and look strangely at the moon." Another "had heard him mutter, as he walked, in some outlandish brogue that nobody could understand." Whilst a third testified, "I know what he is. We have all

met him tramping away towards the sea. Would any man in his senses take all that trouble to look at a parcel of water? He carries on a smug business in the smuggling line." To which Cottle adds, "Thus these ignoramuses drove from their village a greater ornament than will ever again be found amongst them." Murchison was voted a mild lunatic obsessed by worthless pebbles. Did not Darwin's gardener think his master somewhat of a driveller, spending hours gazing at a flower, and not much of a flower at that? Because these sons of insight and prescience had vision amazing of what their fellows failed to see they were classed as victims of hallucination, and sneered at by common-sense. Time, however, has done them justice.

The fate suffered by these illustrious men has naturally befallen the saints, only in an intensified degree. These have awoke to the life of the spirit, seen heaven opened, recognized the supreme law in the voice of God, learned to subdue the flesh in the interests of righteousness, seen in this earthly life a discipline for the life eternal, and entered into discipleship with the Lord Jesus in the path of faith, holiness, and sacrifice; no wonder, therefore, that

they should be misunderstood by the men of this world, and branded as rhapsodists, convulsionists, babblers, fanatics, dreamers. Seeing Him who is invisible, beholding things unseen and eternal, scrutinizing their conduct in the light of the great assize, the course of life of the saints reaches the acme of folly in the eyes of those who know nothing beyond the range of time and sense.

Our Lord shows with whom the want of reason lies. "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke xii. 19-21). The greatest teacher declares that the most fatuous conduct of which we can be guilty is to ally the abiding element of our nature with the fashion of a world that passeth away. A curious incident was recently reported from one of the French railways. A man was seen stooping in the four-foot way in front of an advancing train. When the driver blew his whistle, the man made only a few frantic gesticulations and went on with

his strange proceeding. As the line was straight, he had been seen in time, and the engine was brought to a standstill about a yard distant from him. On the train staff approaching to ascertain the cause of his unaccountable conduct, the man was found to be stuffing his pocket with ballast stones. He was evidently a lunatic, and spoke of the ballast as a Transvaal gold-mine which he was "working." Force had to be used to get him from the line. Are the materialist, the sensualist, the worldling, who make life to consist in the gross tangibilities of wealth and indulgence, who gild vain things with the colours of fancy and passion, and miss the treasures in which is the life of the spirit, are they any wiser? He who ignores the soul and loads himself with thick clay is, in the reckoning of our Lord, the madman. So St. Paul, in preferring the higher truths by which men live, had a method in his madness which altogether redeemed it. The eye of the mole with its defective lens grubbing in the dirt cannot discern the world of glory disclosed to the eye of the eagle gazing on the sun.

The second ground on which the apostle's rationality was impugned was the character of his gospel. "We preach a Messiah crucified,

unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). Precisely here the apostle rendered himself contemptible in the eyes of priests and philosophers. That the highest revelation of the Supreme should be found at Calvary, that the redemption of the world was effected there, that the secret of righteousness is found there, that the gift of God is eternal life through its virtue, was not other than besotted nonsense to the classic people, as it is not less a despicable faith in the esteem of thousands to-day. The doctrine of St. Paul then and now appears to many only as unparalleled infatuation.

In self-justification the apostle charges upon his deriders the failure of their philosophy, and retorts upon them the reproach of foolishness. They had not attained to the knowledge of God. So far as the philosophers themselves were concerned, God had never become more to them than an idea, a vague, unfruitful idea. He was reflected in their mythology as in a dark, distorting mirror. He was a subject for their metaphysics, a theme for their poetry, an ideal for their arts, but of no practical, vitalizing interest either to them or to the multitude; whilst, indeed, many of them denied the Deity

altogether, or despaired of knowing anything concerning Him. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? In the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. i. 20, 21). So far as the multitude were concerned, they were altogether committed to a degrading idolatry into which they had been led by their intellectual masters. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. i. 22, 23). In opposition to this bankruptcy of pagan philosophy, St. Paul proclaimed a gospel in which the abstract idea of Deity had passed into a knowledge of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; in which the righteousness of God, the heart of God, the glorious purpose of God concerning the race, were brought home to the bosom and business of men with inspiring and transforming power. The vision that Cortez beheld with wild eyes from a peak in Darien was small and dim compared with the vision that St. Paul on Mars Hill unveiled to the Gentile world. "As I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar

with this inscription, To an unknown God. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you" (Acts xvii. 23). The God who made the world, who sustains it, who rules it, who redeemed it, who will finally judge it. The God of love, light, life, in whom all His creatures live, move, and have their being. He who declared the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ had no reason to blush for himself, although he had every reason to blush for those who, becoming fools, changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of bird, beast, and creeping thing.

As the pagan had not attained the knowledge of God, so neither had he effected the redemption of man. "For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 18). Despite subtle systems and brilliant rhetoric, society was going to pieces, men were living and dying without hope. Not only had the philosophers failed to discover salvation for the masses, they disclaimed the attempt itself as a hopeless endeavour after an undesirable result; they confined their thought to the happiness of men of culture in the present life. A passage from Lucretius, expressing the philosophy of Epicurus, is thus rendered by Mallock in his volume,

Life and Death, and it casts a direct and lurid light on the words of the apostle just quoted. Epicurus addresses his age :—

> Come unto me, all ye that labour,
> Ye whose souls are heavy leaden, come to me,
> And I will lead you forth by streams that heal,
> And feed you with the truth that sets men free.

On which his Roman disciple, Lucretius, thus comments :—

> And would you know his gospel's name, 'tis this—
> The healing gospel of the eternal death.

Precisely what the apostle laments, they were perishing ; the only gospel they knew being " the healing gospel of the eternal death." Only a few years later St. Paul responded to this dirge with another gospel, the healing gospel of the eternal life which is ours in Christ Jesus. The pretentious philosophy of the Greek proved a religious and moral failure, whilst the boasted orthodoxy of the Jew was practically unavailing. So far as both systems were concerned, civilization was breaking up ; but at the sound of the gospel of Christ the moral life of the race revived, a thrill of power and hope passed through humanity, the dissolving world took a fresh start. Very convincingly does the apostle bring this out in the Epistle before us (1 Cor. i. 26-31).

The message of the Cross may be scorned as "foolish," "weak," "base," "despised," or "vain"; it may be announced by messengers who are not "wise," "mighty," nor "noble"; yet it proves "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed." And ever since the apostolic age this scouted doctrine has continued to demonstrate its saving virtue, conferring purity, peace, and joy to all who welcome it into their heart.

Amiel shrewdly remarks that "nothing is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves towards fools." St. Paul dealt with this class in a delicate way, confuting them with a fine irony which is also irresistible logic. He concedes to the mocker that the gospel of the Cross wears the aspect of folly and weakness; but seeing that when submitted to the test of experience it proves itself "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," we must conclude that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." So with solemn irony he convicts his scorners of impotence and folly, for all know that there is neither in God.

Critics of creation report defects in the solar system; they detect disharmonies in the music

of the world, expose infelicities existing in various organisms, and affect to discover crudities in the disposition and colourings of landscapes, clouds, and sunsets. The clay takes the potter to task, and rebukes his blunders. Yet sane men know that the foolishness of nature is wiser than science, and the weakness of nature diviner than art. The awful beauty of the cosmos, its vast music, its exquisite utilities, declare its practical perfection, and put to shame those who flout it. So critics of redemption reprobate its principles, condemn its methods, and denounce it as a mere superstition; but when the Cross is seen drawing to itself the hearts of millions, securing to them peace of conscience, and inspiring character with strength and beauty, all dispassionate judges will allow that He who best knew how to make a world, best knew how to redeem it. If we had anticipated creation, we should never have guessed that it would have been fashioned as we find it; and if the redemption of the race in the Crucified does not square with our philosophic fancies, it only shows once more that the unwisdom of God is beyond the cleverness of the creature, and that the shortcomings of God surpass the masterpieces of men.

The last ground we need mention on which the sanity of St. Paul was called in question, was the idea and method of the evangelization for which he suffered the loss of all things. Let the apostle himself describe the situation. "For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake. . . . Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now" (1 Cor. iv. 9-13). To endure such sufferings, to be treated like the wild beasts and criminals in the circus, in attempting to carry out a purpose so palpably Utopian, at once convicted the apostle of craziness. That the crucified Carpenter should rebuild the world after a transcendental ideal, and by a programme entrusted to fishermen and slaves, was utterly absurd. The apostle was a madman for renouncing every worldly prospect in devotion to the fatuous policy. If the cause

had been sanctioned by royalty, justified by the schools, propagated by the sword, financed by the rich, it would have commanded respect; but to rest the ambitious movement on the foolishness of preaching was the apotheosis of fanaticism. Such apologists and agents merited neither argument nor pity, only contempt and ridicule. Though St. Paul were not despised for boasting on account of his sufferings as a minister of the gospel, he would be despised for his infatuation in enduring them.

In the reckoning of men of this world, the evangelism of the Church of Christ is the supreme folly of our day. The projects of the Church to bring them that are without to a knowledge of the truth are one after another held up to scorn. As primitive Christianity was riddled with sarcasm, so every revival of it provokes solemn sneer or ribald ridicule. It is such doltish nonsense, such besotted ignorance, such delirious enthusiasm. Whilst the "thinkers" of the day sneer at the absurdities of the Church's beliefs, the "man in the street" is irritated by the silliness of her methods, and even "the princes of this world" leave their science and philosophy, their art and poetry, to bait the deluded Christian humanitarian who makes

serious renunciations in order that he may save the lost. Christian missions constitute a favourite target for the arrows of profane wit. That gold should be lavished, that so many precious lives should be forfeited in these vain enterprises, calls forth cutting satire and indignant invective. Plaudits are showered upon the hero who falls on the field, the explorer perishing in arctic snow or desert sand, the victim of the aeroplane, or upon any one of the many enthusiasts of knowledge or sport who are supposed to suffer in the interests of the race; but in the eyes of the godless critic the missionary suffers senselessly and dieth as a fool dieth. The cynicism with which many writers treat the sublime spectacle of missionary devotion stands quite apart in its blindness and callousness. The brow of the martyr of science is adorned with costliest garland, whilst upon the sinking head of the martyr of humanity is thrust the cap of the zany. It is all explained by the fact that the natural man, blind to eternal realities, is convinced of the absolute irrationality of the spiritual life and whatever it may imply.

St. Paul refused to be put out of countenance by irony and laughter. He knew that beneath the apparent folly of the gospel was the eternal

wisdom, and that we must become fools that we may be wise. Professor Mahaffy, when writing of the national character of the modern Greeks, and referring to the enthusiasm of Lord Byron on their behalf, an enthusiasm which many now think extravagant and misplaced, goes on to remark: "But here, as elsewhere, the folly of a great genius has more truth in it than the wisdom of his feebler critics."[1] A thousand times over does history confirm this reflection. The majority of those who have done the most for us were similarly wanting in prudence; the majority of the actions by which we have profited the most were similarly condemned by the wisdom of this world. The race owes little to Mr. Worldly Wiseman. The folly of the great mind, the indiscretion of the lion heart, the deed that cast policy to the winds, the wild eloquence that ignored "statesmanship" in a passionate appeal for liberty, the sacrifice that forgot arithmetic and proportion, the life that was thrown away—to this unwisdom we owe the most, to such outgoings of folly we look back with peculiar thankfulness and pride. The folly of the great thinker, patriot, humanist, has more truth in it than the

[1] *Rambles and Studies in Greece.*

petty wisdom of a thousand small critics. How true was this in the case of St. Paul! Time has proved it. For the sake of the redeemed race he was "beside himself," yet the ages have shown that in his action and doctrine was deeper truth than in all the philosophy of his contemptuous critics. All who follow his example share in his distinction. Whatever may be the impolicy of the Church of Christ, whatever is defective in its enthusiasms, its blunders are eternities beyond the wisdom of the feebler critics, who are "blind and cannot see afar off."

"And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. xxvii. 29). He has been familiar with contumely from the beginning, and has survived it. His truth has defied worlds of raillery and abuse; and a thousand more Voltaires, Renans, and Nietzsches will in vain exhaust upon it their profane wit. Ridicule cannot kill the faith of Christ, for its simplicity hides the wisdom of God, its tameness the power of God. However greeted with laughter, the Christ will laugh last; or, if He does not, it will be because He weeps over those who in their folly denied His salvation.

We quoted Amiel's observation that "nothing

is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves towards fools"; and we may now note how St. Paul's treatment of this class reveals throughout his delicacy and magnanimity. Richard G. Moulton thus characterizes Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*: "It is one of the greatest pieces of satire in all literature; yet, totally different from the heavy cuts and thrusts of a Juvenal or Dryden, it reads hardly as satire at all, but rather as delicate sword play of prolonged paradoxical irony. . . . Folly puts on cap and bells, mounts a pulpit, and pronounces a eulogium upon herself, claiming as her votaries all classes, from infants to grave divines; all the varying social types, as society was moulded by mediæval philosophy, religion, learning, pass before us in succession, all seen through an atmosphere which is laughter without bitterness. The book is a confirmation of the principle that, in the right hands, a caricature may paint more truly than a portrait."[1] Erasmus, through his Greek Testament, had become a pupil of St. Paul's—imbibing the spirit and following the method of a master satirist. How infinitely removed is the temper of the apostle from the venomous invective

[1] *World Literature.*

which he suffered, and by which the faith that he professed has so often been assailed! Christianity is so sure of itself, so certain of victory, that it needs not to grow angry, and it can afford to deal smilingly with its most truculent revilers. And just as the apostle in his irony displayed a gentle spirit, so he sought only a magnanimous end. Writing concerning fools, a recent writer adds: "The man of ability who thwarts or browbeats these otherwise estimable individuals will repent it. Rather let him use them as the ants do the aphides, patronizing them, taking their produce, and favouring their growth! a truly Machiavellian advice." [1] Very far indeed was the apostolic design from this selfish policy. St. Paul never forgets his purpose by all means to save some; even in his banter he seeks to persuade. It is no pleasure of his to humiliate an erring opponent, but to win him to the heavenly truth and all the blessing it implies. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise."

[1] Dr. Hart, *Evolution and Heredity*.

IN PRAISE OF IMPOTENCE

" If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness."—2 Cor. xi. 30.

" For when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. xii. 10.

NO Greek or Roman would have used this language, or approved of it; the ideal cherished by them was that of strength, as may be seen distinctly enough in the spectacles of the amphitheatre. Their very name is a synonym for power. They gloried in whatever displayed energy, mastery, prowess. Yet in the first passage quoted above St. Paul seems to set himself in direct opposition to the ideal of the illustrious people among whom he laboured, glorying in his personal infirmity and in the social nothingness of his converts. He exults in the very characteristics which the classic nations most deprecated. " I will not glory, save in my weaknesses." " Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses." " For

behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that He might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are" (1 Cor. i. 26-28). Because of this very sympathy with weakness the primitive Christians were so profoundly despised by their pagan neighbours. The Christian Church appeared the asylum of weak-minded, spiritless slaves, and to be made up of "all kinds of outcast and refuse elements." Much the same view of the Christian Church is taken by certain of our present-day philosophers, and for much the same reason. Its members are supposed to have lost all reverence for manliness, and to have made an ideal of mediocrity and imbecility. Men of genius, heroes, and great men are regarded as the meaning of the earth, and the Christian faith substitutes for this glorious aristocracy an ignoble herd without pride, energy, or courage.

Critics represented by Nietzsche find the genius of Christianity personified in Uriah Heep. Whilst they demand intellect, force, and independence, the Church, it is alleged, fawns on ignorance, cowardice, insipidity.

In the second passage quoted, notwithstanding all that has been said, St. Paul discovers a reverence for power. "Then am I strong." After all, strength was his ideal. He aimed to create no maimed, cowed, helpless humanity, but one altogether virile, heroic, conquering. Who writes more often or more emphatically about "power"? It is his favourite theme. He riots in the sense of overwhelming energy. His strain is uniformly martial. His letters constitute a veritable Iliad. If the writings of Luther are "half-battles," the epistles of the apostle are more: they are battles conceived in the spirit of a mighty ambition, urged with unconquerable resolution, throbbing with passion and power, confidently anticipating overwhelming victory. He does not counsel his brethren to shrink and whine like slaves; he boldly challenges them, "Quit you like men, be strong."

Just as we find apparently contradictory views in St. Paul's writings, so similarly con-

trary qualities appear in the apostle himself. Again and again he reveals his extreme sensitiveness, one might say his femininity. Two or three passages shall suffice, although many might be adduced. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 3). How frequently he mentions his tears! "Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears" (Acts xx. 18, 19). "I ceased not to warn every one with tears" (31). "I wrote unto you with many tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4). And the chapters whence our texts are taken reveal his extremely nervous and highly organized nature. Yet, on the other hand, he could exhibit supreme fortitude, appear inexorably hard, and defend himself with indignation and biting irony. On occasion he becomes bold, fiery, overwhelming. Stevenson, in his *Vailima Letters*, writes thus unexpectedly of a plant universally adopted as the very symbol of timorousness: "The sensitive plant, our deadliest enemy. A fool brought it to this island in a pot, and used to sentimentalize over the tender thing. The tender thing has now taken charge of this

island, and men fight it, with torn hands, for bread and life. A singular, insidious thing, shrinking and biting like a weasel; clutching by its roots as a limpet clutches to a rock." Such wrathful power may sleep in poetic things, and such terror be latent in gentle souls. St. Paul was a sensitive plant, not provoked with impunity whilst he sought the good of all men. Adolf Deissmann justly remarks, "The human greatness of St. Paul is revealed by the great polar contradictions observable in his nature. He had room in his personality for opposing principles which would have irretrievably shattered a small man. . . . The opposing principles did not shatter St. Paul; they set up in him the high tension which found an outlet in the energy he expended on the great work of his life." [1] Let us, then, note more closely this strangely mingled strength and weakness.

I. THE POWER IN WHICH THE APOSTLE EXULTS first demands attention. "Then am I strong."

1. The *source* of the power at once comes into evidence. It is "the power of God." He renounces all self-sufficiency that he may prove the excellency of the power of God as revealed in Christ. "I rather glory in my weakness,

[1] *St. Paul.*

that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." Power was his master passion, and he was so enamoured of it that to realize it in a superlative degree he was prepared to renounce the self-sufficiency that excludes the highest power, " the strength of Christ."

The riches and triumphs of civilization are ours because we have been taught to avail ourselves of the forces of nature, which are the forces of God. Just so far as we depend upon our personal resources in attempting to discharge the tasks of the natural life are we lamentably inefficient. Puny creatures whilst we ply an oar, we pass into triumphant pilots when we hoist a sail; with our two hands we can raise merely a trifle, but coercing into our service hydraulic power we remove mountains; trusting to our feet we make painful progress, availing ourselves of steam and electricity we fly as upon the wings of the wind. We can do next to nothing except as we press into our service the cosmic forces; but having succeeded in that, all things are possible. Scientists tell us that by means of appropriate machinery connected with the rise and fall of the tides, any kind of work may be readily performed. Light of surpassing splendour can be generated by

means of magneto-electric machines, and with little exercise of ingenuity every lighthouse on the coast illuminated with sunlike brilliancy; the very same mechanical power of the ocean which, in its brute force, would dash the helpless vessel to pieces against the rocks, can be transformed by man's intellect into a luminous beacon to warn the mariner against the approach of danger. Which things are an allegory. Hitherto we have been steeped in forces that we failed to comprehend, and which, in consequence of our ignorance, too often worked to our loss and destruction; but at length we begin to understand and utilize the energies which solicit us, and they at once effect on our behalf what we could never compass for ourselves, ministering to our security, efficiency, and happiness in an extraordinary degree. In a true sense we surprise the secrets of omnipotence, and thereby magnify ourselves beyond the ancients.

As civilized man achieves his commanding position by identifying himself with the energies of nature and economizing them to his advantage, so St. Paul makes it clear that our moral salvation, enrichment, and perfecting are attained only as we identify ourselves with the

eternal universe and ally ourselves with its forces. He utterly abandons the theory of self-sufficiency in the moral life for a prevailing power above us, beyond us, and yet within us, a power which in a special sense is the power of God. A certain school of moralists would persuade us to forgo the thought of God, and trust everything to our personal wisdom and resolution: on the contrary, St. Paul recalls us from confidence in the flesh to affiance with Him who created all things and who sustains all things by the word of His power. How unceasingly and exultingly does the apostle dwell upon the heavenly grace by which are accomplished moral miracles, for ever impossible to the natural man! "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you" (Rom. xvi. 25). "The exceeding greatness of His power toward us." "According to the working of His mighty power" (Eph. i. 19). "The effectual working of His power" (Eph. iii. 7). "Strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory" (Col. i. 11). These, together with fifty other passages, show the apostle obsessed by the idea of a power which was not less but more than that displayed in the creation, and which at last had been apprehended by men in Christ

Jesus to their uttermost salvation. He was intoxicated by the discovery, as great thinkers are when for the first time they put their finger on one of nature's hidden buttons. He did not glory in the things that concerned his weakness because he approved of weakness, nor because his ideal of the Christian disciple was that of an anæmic creature without grit or go ; he gloried in substituting the excellency of the power which is of God for the pathetic helplessness of the natural man. Nothing is more common or humiliating than the abortive struggles of the unregenerate striving towards the higher life ; and the apostle is in raptures at having found a divine dynamic which rescues the despairing, lifting them to the height of the great ideal.

Not so long ago electricity, magnetism, and other subtleties of nature were overlooked ; but we now know that we live in an organized ocean of these forces, although they cannot be perceived by the senses, and the recognition of these invisibilities and intangibilities has endowed the present generation with splendid power and mastery. So spiritual men recognize that they too live in an ocean of forces unsuspected by the sensual, and

drawing upon these impalpable fountains of strength they scale heights of character, withstand assaults of temptation, and achieve deeds of service and sacrifice, impossible to the carnal. The scorner who mocks at the saint's reliance upon the grace of God for moral mastery, and who vaunts the efficacy of what he calls self-reliance, really invites us to rank ourselves once more with the barbarian, who, knowing nothing of astronomy, electricity, chemistry, and steam, never gets beyond his own personal puny effort. We must forgo the propeller and once more become galley-slaves, ignore the mighty dynamic and put our shoulder to the wheel, moult our wings and walk with bleeding feet. Indeed such degeneration is only a faint image of the folly of renouncing the spiritual forces in which St. Paul exults, to fall back upon the hesitating decisions and abortive strivings of the natural man essaying to live the higher life. "We no longer derive man from 'spirit,' from 'godhead,'" boasts Nietzsche, "we have put him back among the animals." And putting him back among the animals he will know only animal virtue. But St. Paul entertains a loftier conception of human nature; he recognizes in the sons of men the sons of God, a race

of heroes whose natural prerogative is immortal strength and beauty; and to him was revealed the mystery of the power which endues the weak as David, and exalts the house of David as the angel of Jehovah.

2. The *quality* of the power of which St. Paul boasts excites admiration. The Greek passionately coveted intellectual power, and the force of his genius, the richness of his imagination, and the wizardry of his touch extort the homage of successive generations. But the apostle realized in the gospel of Christ a yet higher power, the power making for righteousness. Conscience must not be confounded with intellect; philosophers who attempt to merge conscience in reason do so by imputing to reason qualities pertaining to our moral nature. The mentality which concerns itself with the problems of matter and life stands apart from the spirit of man called to duty by the voice of God. If Nietzsche is permitted to "put us back among the animals," the rational instinct and the moral may alike be ignored; but whilst we credit ourselves with a higher nature and destiny, both faculties will be recognized, only they are not to be confounded. Whilst, however, we regard the two as disparate, the spiritual sense

demands the profounder homage. An elemental man like Corot, the famous artist, one altogether free from philosophical and theological sophistications, instinctively felt this. *The Imitation of Christ* was always on his pillow; it was the book which gave him to live in ease of heart. "I always keep it in my room," he said, "and read it nearly every evening. It has taught me that men must not be puffed up because they are emperors, and add this province or that to their territories, or because they can paint and win a name for themselves. If these men are gifted more or less, I see no merit attaching to them. Theirs is no glory compared to that of St. Vincent de Paul and a sister of charity." The artless utterance of a lucid, noble soul, exalting simple goodness above the splendour of thrones and the trophies of genius, is far more to be relied upon than is the laboured eloquence which seeks to magnify arms, art, science, and literature at the expense of pure life and sacrificial deeds.

In this compound nature of ours the physical organization may be said to occupy a place corresponding to the heaven of clouds and rainbows; the intellectual powers constitute the brilliant constellation of the higher firmament;

but at an immeasurable distance above and beyond soars the third heaven of the spiritual life, with its own incomparable susceptibilities, powers, laws, and beatitudes. St. Paul understood perfectly well that Christ came to illumine, vivify, and govern this highest realm of our humanity. And well might he exult in the strength of Christ which pavilioned his whole personality, making all that it overshadowed royal. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me," *i.e.* rest upon me like the curtains of a royal tabernacle (2 Cor. xii. 9). Without depreciating the physical, a beautiful soul is infinitely more than a fair countenance; without slighting genius, the pure heart ranks above the brilliant brain; and far from wishing the devil to fly away with the fine arts, we may yet pronounce kind words to be more than great music, and noble deeds more illustrious than pictures which mirror nature's utmost glory. St. Paul exulted in the heavenly power which created and maintained the life, splendour, and joy of the highest realm.

The Roman coveted another kind of power, a power felt by men generally as a prize to grasp at—political authority and martial domination.

Here, again, St. Paul had no cause to blush. Renan observes, "Rome, by prodigies of civic virtue, created the force of the world. . . . Force is not a pleasant thing to contemplate."[1] True, force is sometimes not a pleasant thing to contemplate. The wrath of the blizzard, the treachery of the earthquake, the red ruin of the volcano, the blight of the pestilence walking in darkness, are not pleasant to contemplate; nor is a scourge like the tyrannical ascendency of Rome a pleasant thing to contemplate. Yet at other times it is very pleasant to watch the play of force. To behold the might of nature smiling in the daffodil, breathing in the violet, singing in the corn, rioting in the rose, is very delightful; and very delightful, too, is it to witness the energy of the Christian faith shooting life and beauty through whatsoever consents to its sway. "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for"—unlike the Roman power which is so largely destructive—"it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16). This was indeed power to be proud of, the excellency of the power which is of God and not of us.

The new philosophy of pride and brutality, of which Nietzsche is the prophet, boasts of

[1] *History of the People of Israel.*

having discovered a new principle which it is predicted will revolutionize all thought and life. John Addington Symonds once wrote: "Reading bits of Helmholtz's lectures makes me believe that on the method of ethics will depend the future of the human race. . . . One such discovery as Newton's law of gravitation in the field of morals would advance us æons forward in all that concerns spiritual life." [1] Nietzsche believed himself to be the new Newton who had seized the fundamental law of ethics hitherto overlooked, and of which Symonds only faintly dreamed. The German's startling discovery is "The Will to Power." Whatever expresses power, increases power, is good; wickedness is weakness. Power is the Alpha and Omega. This doctrine of power is the burden of Nietzsche, and he enforces it with all the resources of his vigorous eloquence. Everywhere and always we must develop the "Will to Power," making it the pole star of education and desire; then shall the world be peopled by the strong and heroic, instead of the sickly, saintly sentimentalists who at present possess and disgrace it.

But what kind of power are we to will, and to what end shall this power be exercised?

[1] *Biography.*

This is the main matter, and here our philosopher fails us. The power he extols is that of egotism, animalism, war, tyranny, and its outburst threatens pandemonium. Ages ago revelation made it manifest that the will is the centre of personality and the arbiter of destiny; only its canon enjoined, not the Will to Power, but the Will to Righteousness. A righteous will is the sublime creation of divine grace—a will so strengthened that the highest law becomes possible throughout the whole character and life of the believer. "We do not cease to pray that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to work worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory" (Col. i. 9-11). A Will to Righteousness, made effective by the Spirit of God who worketh in us mightily, was the ideal of St. Paul. The energy of omnipotence purging, stimulating every fibre of our being, and producing in the life every lovely cluster of practical righteousness, was his passionate quest. The apostle was not afraid of power of any sort; he had a Will to Power, even with the capitals, he was an

enthusiast for strength in every department, of all men he had least sympathy with the effeminate and flabby, he loved power and its multiplication, but it was to enable men in all their faculties, attributes, and activities to reach the highest in justice, purity, and love. Egotism, cruelty, and licence are not the signs of heroes ; the best proof of the heroic is in the strangling of the ape and tiger in ourselves, and in the readiness to deliver our brother from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear.

It has been said, " For the stern virtues of paganism, the virtues which stand out so attractively in the pages of Plutarch's *Lives*, St. Paul would substitute another type of goodness, gentle, kind, self-denying, not seeking its own, pure, chaste, and forgiving. And we know that, as a matter of history, it was the beauty and attractiveness of the best type of Christian life which gradually won over the world." [1] True that St. Paul wrote, " Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any ; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do

[1] Gardner, *The Religious Experience of St. Paul.*

ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 12-14). This may sound very unlike the pages of Plutarch glorifying courage, violence, heroism, the triumphs of tactics, strength, and ambition, yet in fact there is no attempt on the part of St. Paul to discourage "the stern virtues of paganism," only to purify them from base motive, irregular passion, false ends. "The virtues which stand out so attractively in the pages of Plutarch's *Lives*" stand out far more attractively in the pages of the Epistles. The misdirected virility of the one has given place to righteous manliness in the other. Which of the heroes of Greece and Rome surpass in grandeur of character or majesty of action the apostle of the Gentiles and his fellow-evangelists, confessors, and martyrs? "The beauty and attractiveness of the best type of Christian life which won over the world" would never have prevailed had it lacked strength and courage. Seeing the part that force played in the ancient world, and the reverence that was done it, namby-pambiness would hardly have captivated the popular imagination. The truth is that St. Paul did not attempt to "substitute another type of goodness," but to

expand its range, to maintain that no incongruity existed between the two classes of virtues, the two types of goodness, that each was perfect only when combined, and that both might be illustrated in the same individual at the same time. He aimed to rescue the heroic from the smell of blood and the iron of tyranny, and to baptize it into justice and beneficence. He affirmed that trumpet and lute occupy an equally honoured place in the Christian choir, and blend in one high music. The originality of his position and doctrine was so amazing that friends and critics to this day often fail adequately to grasp it.

II. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF WEAKNESS IS THE CONDITION OF THE REALIZATION OF SUPERIOR STRENGTH AND MERIT is the final teaching of St. Paul. He took pleasure in necessities, persecutions, and distresses, because he knew that in such discipline was the apprenticeship of greatness. The assumption of knowledge, the conceit of self-sufficiency, or the complacency of vanity is fatal to any real growth in wisdom and efficiency. By the acknowledgement of our personal ignorance, blindness, emptiness, helplessness, and failure do we acquire vision, capability, conquest. We

become fools that we may be wise ; through the confession of worthlessness we qualify for honour ; we take the lowest seat as candidates for the highest ; only as we recognize the poverty of our fitness do we attain skilfulness and mastery. All this is commonplace, habitually acknowledged and observed. All this the apostle practically understood. He gloried in infirmities and humiliations, not because he was insipid, unambitious, servile ; rather did he thus glory because with sublime aspirations he saw that only through the sense of infirmity and discipline could he reach transcending strength. The consciousness of his frailty caused him to prize the dynamic of which he was so painfully destitute ; emptied of the pride of self-sufficiency, room was made for the cordial entertainment of Him whose power is made perfect in weakness. And this experience of insufficiency and painfulness fitted him the more perfectly for the work of the apostleship. John Addington Symonds writes, " I almost believe sometimes that the suffering of great mental pain gives quality to work we do in quite alien regions." That personal pain gives quality to work, and to work in quite alien regions, is evidenced by the painter whose poverty is the

secret of his pathetic art, by the poet who learns in suffering what he teaches in song, and supremely is this the case with the philanthropist and evangelist. They deal directly with humanity in its deepest need, impotence, suffering, and sorrow ; not in an alien region do they act, but in the immediate realm of the heart with all its problems. So the multiplied tribulations of St. Paul imparted quality to his preaching and pastorate ; he was eminently availing because his manifold sorrows enabled him to enter so sympathetically and influentially into the experience of the people. " Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church " (Col. i. 24). The fact is that the apostle combined the strongest and most sensitive elements of character, and this polarity made him the effective minister that he was. According to a French philosopher, " A man is only strong when he bears within him some antitheses strongly marked." St. Paul is a striking illustration of this dictum. All greatness reveals the trembling and terror of the sea ; or, to change the image, it resembles the lighthouse which bends to the storm on which it

smiles. Thus the apostle who wrought out his calling with fear, trembling, and tears, was also unshaken by the fiercest tempests that ever beat on confessor and martyr.

Do we not see something corresponding to the apostle's mingling of strength and weakness in the most illustrious thinkers? The lowliness of mind exemplified by Sir Isaac Newton has greatly impressed all familiar with his history; they are indeed more charmed with his humility than astonished by the magnificence of his discoveries. He approached vast problems with the consciousness of personal ignorance and limitation, and so was prepared for the vision of truths hidden from the foundation of the world. The simplicity of Faraday excites universal admiration. Thinking the very least of himself, and deeply solemnized before the mystery and glory of the universe, he surprised its secrets. The meekness of Darwin has passed into a proverb. He studied the world as one who knew nothing, he brooded over things with a childlike spirit, and by virtue of a noble modesty was admitted within the veil of nature's temple. If, then, this poverty of spirit is called for in the intellectual world and so plentifully rewarded, how much more is it essential in the

quest of the lights, treasures, perfections, and felicities of the moral sphere! One wonders sometimes what kind of figure the superman with his pride and arrogance will cut in the intellectual world, and what will be the measure of the discoveries made by men of this temper. Will egotism, ferocity, and boundless self-sufficiency replace with advantage the docility and reverence of Newton, Faraday, and Darwin? We can hardly believe that nature will disclose her secrets to students of this truculent type, seeing that in all the past the meek have inherited the earth. And if the fine "animals of prey" promise so little in the domain of science, what can be expected from them in the realm of spirituality and conduct!

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Our Lord shows us the way to glory, honour, and immortality. The philosophy of pride, arrogance, and self-will may postulate power as its ideal, but the sovereign power it can never reach. It has mistaken the pathway. St. Paul followed his Master, and through self-distrust and broken-heartedness was made invincible. Quiet, sensitive, timorous is the power that vanquishes the world. It takes care of itself without further armour, and in

hottest fight puts to flight the army of the aliens.

> Innocence shall make
> False accusation blush, and tyranny
> Tremble at patience.

The vulgar animal power and undefined freedom for which a sensual philosophy pleads are at best but coarse counterfeits of veritable courage and manliness. The real virtues exhibit the sensitiveness and modesty which characterize all the strong things of nature, only these finer traits the apologists of animalism naturally overlook, or misinterpret and deride. With no religious prepossessions, Balzac discerned that "a man who acknowledges his weakness is strong indeed."

IN PRAISE OF RIVALRY

"For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many."—2 Cor. ix. 2.

ONCE more we refer to Nietzsche, the popularity of whose philosophy at the present moment justifies our repeated quotation. We may remind ourselves that this writer fiercely denounces Christianity for destroying what he calls "the tonic passions"; under this unhappy faith, he maintains, we have lost all love and reverence for manliness. Enfeeblement is the Christian recipe for taming men. Let us cite his own words: "All old morality-monsters, and especially Christianity, have waged war against the passions with a view to exterminating them. They never asked whether it were possible to spiritualize, beautify, or deify a desire. But to attack the passions at the root means to attack life itself at the root. . . . The priest who practises the art calls

the taming of men the 'improving' of them. Anybody who knows what goes on in menageries will be doubtful about the 'improving of animals there.'" Under the influence of Christianity "the splendid beast of prey has been lost" from human nature, and heroic man reduced to a timid, prudent, sickly, domesticated animal. Now all depends upon what is meant by "taming," and we venture to submit that the influences of Christian civilization are not fitly represented by the summary processes and equivocal results of menagerie discipline. The horticulturist transplants the wild tree of the jungle to the walled menagerie of his garden, where by-and-by its spines and poison are lost, and it becomes a veritable palm of paradise in beauty and fruition. Are we doubtful about this improving, or disappointed with this taming? The tree misses nothing of its vigour, only now its forces flow in benign channels. Wolves and jackals were the ancestors of our familiar canine domestic breeds; in other words, the primitive wild beast has been tamed into the dog. Is the result of this taming altogether regrettable? Does any one say that the hound of Llewellyn protecting the sleeping babe was inferior to the bloodthirsty wolf that sought to devour

him? Was there not a real improvement here? Nietzsche, with his admiration for the wild beast, sides with the wolf; but the vast majority of sane people will see in the faithful dog the nobler animal and the benefit of taming.

The supreme instance of this taming is found in the restraining and purifying influence of the Christian doctrine and spirit. Disciples of the "blood and iron" school may gibe at religious men as domesticated animals in whom the strong instincts of nature have been suppressed; but the dispassionate critic has no difficulty in recognizing in our Lord, and in all who are like Him, a type of humanity infinitely uplifted beyond the egotism, brutality, and malignity of the natural man. Nietzsche complains that "Christianity specially has waged war against the passions with a view to exterminate them." Exactly what it has not done. "It never asked whether it were possible to spiritualize, beautify, or deify a desire." No, it never asked that question, but proceeded to work the miracle. It makes no attack upon the passions at their root; it accepts our nature in its integrity, and by restraining, chastening, renewing, and directing its instincts and impulses, seeks to restore

us in our wholeness to truth and spirituality, to purity and beauty.

The text supplies another illustration of the point for which we contend, viz. that Christianity does not ignore, but only sanctifies the appetites and principles which lie at the root of human nature. "And your zeal hath provoked very many." Here the principle of emulation, competition, rivalry, is recognized and allowed a legitimate place in the highest sphere of life and action. That competition is a root principle of life is evident enough. What is now known as the struggle of existence is to a large extent a competition amongst the creatures as to which shall excel in strength, vision, suppleness, or speed; the maintenance of their efficiency and the process of their evolution are thus secured. According to the modern conception nature is one vast field of rivalry; beast, bird, and fish are matched one against another, according to their order, and the life and happiness of each are regulated by the measure in which it surpasses. The fundamental law of the cosmos is rivalry. No development takes place without it; without it the organism inevitably degenerates. Whatever is gained in sight, strength, or swiftness by one order, provokes

a corresponding advance in the order against which it is pitted. If it is objected that the animal world is unconscious of this law of rivalry by which it is dominated, the reply is ready, that its unconsciousness does not alter the fact. The Supreme has established the principle, which never ceases to work in every department, that the perfection of all things and creatures is secured, and secured only, by ceaseless competition.

Human society obeys the same law. All healthy beings feel that they must keep their place, if possible better it, and to do this they must strain every nerve lest they are outdone. In his interesting book, *Rifle, Axe, and Saddle-bags*, Dr. Milburn gives a lively picture of the steamboats on the great American rivers in the early days, and thus graphically describes the power of the competitive element in human nature: "If another boat heave in sight, you find yourself becoming anxious that she shall not pass you. If she gain upon your craft, all your fears about the dangers of racing are laid aside; and with your fellow-passengers, male and female, you are urging the captain to do his best. You run first to the deck to incite the firemen, and then to the hurricane deck to

note the speed. The interest deepens, the first shot is fired, the battle has opened, and men and even women are no longer cowards. Every sense is strained, and yet the mind and nerves are wonderfully calm. Side by side the boats go thundering along, and so completely has the thought of victory taken possession of you, that you would almost as soon be blown up as beaten."

This sense of rivalry obtains in every department. The moving factor in athletics, right away from the Grecian games down to the struggles of modern football and regatta, is the passion to excel. As a leading journal has just observed, "The historian of the future will probably record the growth of international rivalry in sports as one of the most striking developments of the last few decades. There is nowadays an almost continuous succession throughout the year of meetings, matches, tournaments, competitions in almost every kind of athletic exercise, between teams or individuals representing different nationalities; and the result of each is awaited almost by whole peoples with the deepest interest." It is equally the spur in the intellectual arena, as on the stadium, racecourse, or river. Students challenge each

other, call each other out, prompt each other to yet more strenuous endeavour and brilliant achievement. In the serene air of art craftsmen vie with each other in the pursuit of perfection. Zeuxis was the rival of Parrhasius ; and in our own day Turner, spurred by the same temper, hung his masterpieces over against those of Claude. Competition is the soul of the commercial world. The whole fabric of industrialism is sustained and developed by the determination of the manufacturer and merchant not to allow themselves to be outstripped. When it is attempted to soften stark antagonism by various systems of co-operation, emulation still persists in one form or another if such co-operative organizations are not to degenerate. The spirit of emulation pervades the whole range of national and international life, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The principle is grounded in the very constitution of nature. A solitary thing is stationary or retrogressive ; only through number and conflict are high finish and felicity attained, alike in the individual and the species. The spirit of rivalry cannot be eliminated from society without dissolving it. According to Bishop Lightfoot, " This provocation—this stimulus of comparison

and contrast—is an invaluable influence. We measure ourselves with others; we see our defects mirrored in their excellences; our ideal is heightened by the comparison."

That the working of this principle of competition occasions immense evil and misery is painfully felt by every lover of humanity. It is essential to the very existence of nature and society; yet it rarely asserts itself without creating bad feeling and manifold unhappiness. It generally appears to bring out the worst in us. It evokes envy, jealousy, hatred, cunning, malice, and revenge. It usually signifies pride in the victor and humiliation in the vanquished. It converts the whole world into a gladiatorial arena in which everything sordid and brutal is illustrated. The apostle recognizes its baneful influence in the community. "Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. v. 26). He deprecates its disastrous working in the family. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath" (Eph. vi. 4). And in the religious sphere it is to be guarded against. "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves" (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25).

Here the whole spirit of contention, as generally manifested, is condemned. Yes, we may challenge one another, emulate and strive one with another, with such feelings and aims that we mutually develop our worst qualities. So seriously and incontestably bad are the results of rivalry, broadly considered, that the principle itself is suspected, and we are anxiously looking around to see if it cannot be replaced by a less invidious arrangement.

Yet the apostle more than once appeals to this very principle of emulation, which in other cases he reprobates. Our text is a striking instance. An eminent scholar speaks after this manner of the word "provoke," used in the Authorized Version: "The old translators, children of the Renaissance, who often wrote, and sometimes thought, in Latin, used words of Latin origin in a sense much closer to the original, and hence in a sense far more precise than we have come to do. 'Provoke' is an instance. Its original, '*provocare*,' meant to 'call a man out,' to challenge him, and this sense will always be found underlying its use in these Tudor translations of Scripture. 'To provoke the Lord' means to challenge Him to pit His strength against ours. 'Love is not

easily provoked' meant 'is not stung' (the Greek word) by a challenge into hostile action. 'Provoking one another,' challenging one another to controversy." What, then, is the attitude of St. Paul in our text? "I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many." In the first instance, the zeal of the Achaians in collecting money for the poor in Jerusalem roused the jealousy of the Macedonians; and now the apostle seeks to provoke Corinth by the liberality of Macedonia. Here is the principle of rivalry, the calling out of one another, the stimulating of one another in a generous cause. In the interests of philanthropy, St. Paul avails himself of the passion that urges men to do their utmost lest they should be eclipsed. The freedom with which the apostle uses the imagery of the Greek and Roman athleticism is instructive. He must have felt serious objections to much that was associated with the games of running, wrestling, and pugilism; but it is evident enough that he had no objection to the competitive principle on which these games were based. The personal physical inferiority of the apostle is gener-

ally assumed, and it might have been thought that he would have mentioned these contests only to criticize and denounce them; yet it is not so. He unquestionably approves of the philosophy of the thing, and without a qualifying or an apologetic word appropriates to the illustration of the highest life the whole range of the imagery of the arena.

When treating of our text in his commentary on this epistle, Dr. James Denney proceeds thus: "The legitimacy of such motives as are appealed to in this paragraph will always be more or less questioned among Christian men; but as long as human nature is what it is they will always be appealed to. A great man of action like St. Paul will, of course, find his temptations along this line. He is so eager to get men to act, and the inertness of human nature is so great, that it is hard to decline anything which will set it in motion. It is not the highest motive, certainly, when the forwardness of one stimulates another; but in a good cause it is better than none." This is far, we humbly submit, from doing justice to the position and argument of the apostle. We cannot allow that the line of reasoning followed by him is doubtful, or that the motives to which he appeals require

apology. Nor do we understand that in his enthusiasm he urged even an inferior motive, one better than none. "As long as human nature is what it is." St. Paul appealed to human nature as it is—as, we venture to say, it ever will be. Not to a defective human nature, one having relation to sin and infirmity, but to that essential human nature, the condition of whose permanent development and perfection as established by divine ordination is that of rivalry. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." If we understand aright this peep into the heavenly, it seems to signify that something like rivalry is the law of the highest universe, and that in a veritable duel of sublime service and song the seraphim glow and grow. Matthew Arnold sings of what is

> Too great for haste, too high for rivalry;

but it would appear, as we listen to the antiphony of the Throne, that in creature life the provocative principle goes very high indeed. Anyhow, it is the law of life and progress here and now. The Christian Church has too often erred in not taking "human nature as it is"; or, in other

words, in failing to discriminate between what is accidental and blameworthy and what is primitive and essential in our constitution, and in not doing justice to the latter. It is here, unfortunately, that we make room for philosophers like Nietzsche. There is no occasion to do it. We cannot but see that the individual quickly responds to the spur of competition, whilst the social system at every point declares the need of mutual stimulation and provides it.

Christianity accepts this root principle of human nature; it is not afraid of it, however dangerous it may prove; it accepts the principle, raises and purifies it, converts it into a grand incitement making for progress and felicity. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. x. 24). Here at length we get the law of emulation redeemed from all ignoble alloy and association, applied strictly to the highest ends, and working only for the uplifting, beautifying, and blessedness of mankind. The much-denounced process of contention is taken out of the world and enthroned in the Church, converted, baptized into a new spirit, calling forth the best that is in men, prompting civilization to reach victories and enhancements hitherto undreamed of. Men like

Nietzsche believe that the progress of the race is secured only by fangs, tusks, stings, beaks, and talons; on the other hand, Christ has taught us that the law of rivalry may be so divinely transmuted that the competitors will show, not who can do most brilliantly in skill and strength to the detriment of his neighbour, but who can perform the highest service and the most of it; not who can inflict the greatest humiliation on his rival, but who can best inspire him; not who can most effectually subjugate and destroy, but who can best save and bless. Competition, whose animating principle is love, not suspicion, wrath, or envy; rivalry with reverence, seeking to shine in beneficent deeds, not in vainglorious exhibitions of selfishness and pride,—these are the happy features of the antagonisms of the future. Who shall give the most, do and suffer the most, for the common advantage. The iron law, the law of the red tooth, changed by a heavenly alchemy into a golden rule whose sway can mean only the greatest advancement and felicity. A recent authority in science reminds us thus of the grim law dominating creation: "In the fierce battle of life there is small chance for the exercise of charity. We have no evidence

to show, apart from certain instinctive traits, that one being ever helps another unless something is given in return." [1] The vision of the world that shall be promises that the competition of the future will undergo a vast and delightful change, when the adversary will prove the helper, when men will not only strive together in their prayers for each other, but also in the same spirit strive together in all relations of life for the profit of many.

It is here that the sceptic makes the omission that renders void so much of his reasoning. He accuses Christianity of being the enemy of progress, because, as is alleged, so far from stimulating our highest powers by emulation and antagonism, it destroys our virile qualities, deprives us of masterfulness and courage, and renders us ignobly contented and docile. It is the enemy of progress inasmuch as it forbids the ambition and rivalry which constitute the mainspring of progress. But the serious mistake of this criticism is found in the fact that, so far from Christianity discrediting the tournament of courage and substituting for it servility and cowardice, it supplies a new and superior principle of conflict. Nietzsche may scoff at the

[1] Bastin, *Plant Life*.

apostle as a milksop, but Comte uniformly speaks of him as "the incomparable St. Paul," and saw in his altruistic doctrine one of the main forces heralding a higher civilization. The Lord Jesus gave the race "a new commandment"; in other words, He declared a new law that is as fundamental in morals as gravitation is in physics, the law of love which is to assert itself in every sphere. And we may without trepidation commit the fortunes of mankind to the operation of this new law. "King Ahaz took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it on a pavement of stones." Our Lord lifted society from a pavement of stones, a mean basis of hard, wounding selfishness, to set it high on a basis of pure gold. More and more it is recognized that love, unselfishness, sacrifice are the sovereign forces; and whenever the day dawns that these sublime dynamics are applied on an imperial scale, progress will be accelerated beyond all records of the past and a civilization bloom of excelling glory.

Are we not justified in cherishing this glowing hope? Do we not already perceive in the world of sport how competition is being freed from debasing elements, and is being wrought out in

the spirit of friendliness? Do not the evidences of amity multiply in the sphere of trade? In various directions we get glimpses that the ruthless operation of the competitive law is being leavened by worthier sentiments. And even in Christian denominations the controversies and hostilities of former days are softened, and they are beginning to discover that milder forms of competition will better serve their common purpose. Love is the most powerful principle that we know; there is no dynamic to equal the energy of unselfishness; and when once the competitive system has been caught up into the higher sphere where Christ reigns, when it has been hallowed by His truth and temper, the corruptible will put on incorruption, and the glory and joy of humanity be secured for ever.

How entirely helpful will this sanctified spirit of rivalry prove as it penetrates the intellectual sphere! Instances have already been cited of the spirit of envy and hatred tainting the higher realms of artistry, and it is sad to think of the beautiful things whose creation has been prompted by jealousy and hateful feeling rather than by the thirst for perfection. Kay Robinson writes: "In winter, as in spring, the song of birds is the language of hate. The idea of

the nightingale pouring forth his soul in love for his brooding mate is beautiful, but not true. The real meaning of those exquisite trills and quavers is defiance of that other nightingale." And it is disenchanting to think to what a large extent the most delightful things in painting, poetry, music, and literature have sprung, not altogether from the pure love of the lovely, but that they owe their creation also to defiance of that other artist. Eastern legend tells of the devil attempting to make a rainbow ; too many objects of surpassing charm originated in egotism and hate. But this is no essential condition of artistic inspiration. The distinguished sculptor, John Gibson, when struggling upward in his profession at Rome, lets us into a happier secret. " As I walked to my breakfast every morning I felt myself inspired with a feeling of daily renovated youth and fresh enthusiasm. How joyfully did I return to the combat, to that invigorating strife with the difficulties of art ! Nor did I feel the worm of envy creeping round my heart whenever I saw in the studios of others a beautiful idea skilfully executed by any of my young rivals. I might at times feel a depression of mind, something like discouragement, but nothing of that low jealousy ; con-

stantly spurred on by the talents around me, I returned to my studio with fresh resolution." [1] This is the type of the nobler strife; and we may well believe that in better times coming this golden spur will provoke the gifted to effect rarer wonders than hate ever wrought.

How uplifting shall this nobler rivalry prove when it once takes possession of our whole social life! Taine observes that "People of wit never have so much wit as when they are together." This means that rivalry prompts the intellect and strikes out its more brilliant flashes. Wit kindles wit, the sight and discussion of beauty inflame the artist imagination, and orators wax doubly eloquent contending with orators. Let the rivalry of men become pure and generous, extending throughout the realm of social life, influencing all its interests and endeavours, and we may anticipate with confidence a marvellous enhancement of public achievement and happiness. When the spirit of Christ pervades the community, instead of bringing the worst out of men, competition shall bring out the best; instead of degrading, as does the rivalry of ambition and greed, pure emulation shall elicit latent possibilities, magnify us,

[1] *Autobiography.*

awake the genius of goodness which sleeps in us all.

How blessed shall ennobled emulation prove in international life! To-day international rivalry is chiefly concerned with questions of wealth, power, and dominion; whilst envy, jealousy, injustice, and falsehood inspire diplomacy and direct its subterfuges. Fires are said to originate in the great forests of the West through the friction of the branches of trees agitated by the wind, and in this way magnificent woods are destroyed. So the nations misjudge each other, friction is set up, and all too frequently mutual suspicion leads up to the catastrophe of war. The day comes when the nations will provoke each other, call each other out, in the causes of education, liberty, virtue, and beneficence; when a country will be chiefly proud of its pre-eminence in knowledge, righteousness, and contentment, and genuinely ashamed to fall behind its neighbours in these royal attributes. The vulgar international rivalry of the present is far, indeed, below this ideal; yet we are not without signs of a dawning era when the nations in generous rivalry shall bring out the best in each other, spur each other to reach the higher things, and when the victory

of one shall be the enrichment of all. "First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (Rom. x. 19). Under the government of God the race shall be perfected by the reactions of the various nations, tribes, and tongues; not any longer military conflict, but the provocations that shame and arouse to higher attributes. Patriotism so often mingled with foul elements shall become a discipline unto righteousness. Never will human nature be more virile than in that day, or life more intense; never will men be more manly or heroes more brave. Agitated by the profoundest passion of love and sympathy, stimulated by the sublime desire to excel in the service of humanity, the grandest style of citizen and patriot will be evolved: far grander than that created by the gladiatorial *régime*, when the combatants proved their superiority by cutting each other's throat.

How delightful to anticipate the time when the relations of the Churches shall be regulated by the nobler emulation! St. Paul stimulates the Macedonians by the promptitude of the Corinthians, and the Corinthians by the liberality of the Macedonians. The pattern of the legiti-

mate rivalry of the Churches of Christ, of the emulation by which His cause is best served. Alexander, urged to contend in the Olympic games, replied, "I will, when you find me kings to run with." The race of the Churches is a race of kings, and the crown for which they strive is one reserved for largest service and sacrifice. But how often is this forgotten, and Christian societies contend for privilege, precedence, pride, and the honour that cometh from men! Humanitarianism will never supersede nationality, nor the triumph of godliness extinguish denominationalism; "God hath set one thing over against another," and His final purpose will be perfected by the action and interaction of diversified systems, but as love is made perfect the contrariety will produce only a higher harmony. Then shall a Church glory in its successes for Christ's sake; only ashamed to be less devoted than its peer; and by the sight of the other's zeal and triumph shall it be provoked to realize the fullness of its capacity and resource. "They one cry to another."

Let it not be thought that this anticipation of an ideal state is to be dismissed as a utopian theological dream, a dream without sanction from independent thinkers. Such an ultimate

state is suggested with startling clearness and confidence by philosophers of various schools of thought, but all of them alike alien to the Christian faith. Rousseau, with the poetic temper and romantic mood, foresaw for the race a condition of surpassing freedom, harmony, and happiness. Jeremy Bentham, from quite another standpoint, announced the perfectibility of man and the coming of the kingdom of justice, plenty, and peace. His science might be what Carlyle called it, "the dismal science"; yet it was lighted up with splendid gleams of apocalyptic hope. From a still different Pisgah, Comte beheld the promised land. He never loses a pathetic sense of the ingrained imperfection of human nature; but he assumes the possibility of a revolution in the dispositions and principles of men, and anticipates a millennial condition of humanity in its order, happiness, and progress. And, finally, Nietzsche, with an atheistic philosophy unlike that of any of his intellectual kindred, postulates a superman in a superworld of dazzling greatness, glory, and joy. To him, as to St. John, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be"; but in some terrestrial New Jerusalem we are to transcend ourselves, and live in a liberty and magnificence of power and

beauty that has not yet entered into our heart to conceive. There is a truth in things that forbids us to doubt the validity of these dreams. The hope of a grander world is inherent in the soul. Saint and sceptic, from widely different outposts and with differing aspects, see the vision of a diviner future; but their outlook is practically the same, and it shall not be mocked.

IN PRAISE OF COVETOUSNESS

" But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And a still more excellent way show I unto you."—1 Cor. xii. 31.

So far as secondary gifts are concerned, revelation requires the limitation of desire. Its promises in the direction of spiritual power and possibility are practically infinite, and it awakens in the sympathetic reader desires for highest endowments and experiences ; but in relation to intellectual distinction and worldly aspiration it counsels moderation. No sacred writer emphasizes the doctrine of moderation more frankly than does St. Paul. The duty of contentment with paucity of worldly goods could hardly be stated more strongly than in the letter he writes to Timothy. " But godliness with contentment is great gain : for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out ; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content." Or, as in the margin, " In these we shall

have enough." And the strain of his teaching throughout is to the same effect. The most rigid monasticism might plausibly quote the apostle as justifying their utter nakedness.

Yet in the passage under consideration he sanctions the very passion which at other times he appears so anxious to discredit. After having urgently enjoined contentment with such gifts as fall to us, and with the conditions of life in which we find ourselves, he urges us to seek the utmost faculty, together with such distinction and power as naturally accompany eminent gifts. It is true that the apostle is speaking more particularly of spiritual gifts, and of gifts commonly regarded as miraculous ; yet without doubt the principles he lays down concerning these uncommon endowments are equally applicable to the natural talents of mankind. The gifts enumerated in this chapter as heavenly inspirations—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, powers, prophecy, discernings of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues—suggest and represent those gifts of learning, insight, prescience, science, expression, and criticism bestowed on elect souls in all generations, and which in truth are not less miraculous than are the special faculties imparted

to the primitive saints. Science, art, invention, discovery, the craftsman's skill, literature, music, poetry, language, philosophy, and all ability of practical and social life, are as truly and immediately inbreathings of the Spirit of God as were the singular gifts of Pentecost. The chapter before us discloses the grand source of intellectual power, and reminds us of the laws which ought to regulate the application of the rich variety of the divine gifts; and so far is St. Paul from inculcating an ignoble contentment, that he strives to kindle within his brethren fervent enthusiasm for the highest perfection and for whatever such perfection may bring.

Treating the doctrine of contentment, the antinomies of the Christian faith and character reappear. St. Paul was of robust character, naturally ambitious and aspiring, as Renan says, "Never prepared to play the second fiddle"; yet he declares himself entirely indifferent to circumstance, ready to accept the inferior or superior condition as it might happen to befall him. Writing to the Philippians, he avouches, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything

and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want" (iv. 11, 12). A very remarkable statement, especially when the character of the speaker is considered. Races of a low type uncomplainingly accept the most trying vicissitudes; destitute of the sensibilities of the highly civilized, all conditions are to them much alike. Sven Hedin, writing of his Asiatic porters working steadily on amid ice, snow-storms, hunger, and fatigue, continues: "Singular men, always cheerful and contented, never downhearted and complaining, taking everything as it comes, and calm and composed in all kinds of wind and weather."[1] With civilization a more sensitive nature emerges, and discontent becomes chronic and acute. But even amongst the cultured the apostle was exceptionally sensitive. In estimating the character of the eighteenth-century politician, Oxford, Lecky observes, "It is the strength of slow and sluggish temperaments that they can often bear the vicissitudes of fortune with a calm constitutional courage rarely attained by more nervous and highly organized natures, and this attribute Oxford pre-eminently displayed. Swift pro-

[1] *Trans-Himalaya.*

nounced him to be, of all men he had ever known, the least changed either by adversity or prosperity."[1] St. Paul was at the utmost remove from this stoical, phlegmatic temper; there are numerous evidences of his highly-strung nature, and yet he had learned to accommodate himself to each hard or flattering instance of fortune with serene indifference. Are we to infer from all this that the action of the Christian faith had blunted his refined feeling, destroyed his natural desire and ambition, and reduced the man of splendid sensibilities to the level of the callous Asiatic porters? Certainly not. All his native passion and susceptibility remained, his temperament had been rendered yet more exquisite; but in the faith of Christ he had attained a higher view and a diviner strength in which apparently irreconcilable qualities were harmonized, and he became at once the most aspiring and contented of men. Just as science teaches that there is in each particle of matter an awful latent power restrained by balancing circumambient forces, so the mighty passion for power and privilege in the heart of St. Paul, an ambition vaster than that of Napoleon, was bounded and

[1] *History of England in the Eighteenth Century.*

controlled by larger moral and eternal considerations.

Critics of the faith accuse our religion of limiting desire, of damping the fire of the soul, of ignoring the splendid possibilities of thought and life, and of rendering its disciples content with the meanest attainments and status. They are fond of picturing the typical Christian as a tame, insipid, anæmic creature, utterly destitute of the energy and efficiency which are the natural outcome of high aspiration. Language fails them adequately to describe and deride the vapid, mawkish, mediocre, spiritless saint, "the moral cow with its plump comfortableness." Now, were it actually the case that the religion of the Christ narrowed life's horizon, impoverished its ideals, diminished the fullness of its spirit and desire, it would stand utterly condemned. The passion for the best gifts is the source and secret of the world's progress. The unceasing development of things is explained by the illimitable desire, the insatiable hunger, the inextinguishable curiosity and acquisitiveness of the human mind.

Man's highest action is to reach up higher.

A system of philosophy or religion that would

abate the covetousness of our nature, rendering us passive and unaspiring, is above all things to be deprecated with horror.

We indignantly deny that the faith of Christ frosts aspiration, that it reconciles to mean situations, breeds an unmanly contentment with inferior gifts, leaves its disciples lukewarm and indifferent. On the contrary, it is the awakener of the soul, the fount of power, the inspirer of high, intense ambition. The walking-stick insect found in the forests of Guiana has perfect wings; but they are pitiful affairs, mere mockeries of pinions, barely an inch in extent, whilst the body of the insect is almost five inches in length. Listening to ignorant critics of our faith, we might suppose that this degraded creature closely represents the Christian disciple with his suppressed aspirations, his wings, if not altogether aborted, yet reduced to merest mockeries. We decline to believe in the fitness of this analogy. We think that we can find a more exact metaphor, a far truer symbol. An albatross, weighing only seventeen pounds, has wings spreading eleven feet. Here is the similitude of the saint; the minimum of the gross combined with the utmost amplitude of the soaring. Whilst the animal life is duly

chastened in the Christian disciple, his upward-seeking instincts for all spheres are mightily quickened. "When they stood, they let down their wings," is the report of Ezekiel concerning the celestial hosts. The saints are fashioned after the likeness of the cherubim; they are well able to stand upon their feet, they do not lack terrestrial aptitude and efficiency, yet the wings are the salient feature.

That a spiritual faith, realizing itself in high moral perfection, does not repress ambition and desire, but, on the contrary, begets faculty and excellence in all directions, is being continually demonstrated. Men who before their conversion displayed little mental strength, force of character, audacity of enterprise, successfulness of life, subsequently reveal eminent capacity and mastery. Some Alpine plants produce flowers which never open. They are of quite normal structure, but either through lack of sufficient light or warmth they do not unfold. These arrested growths remind us of the unrealized genius which poets and philosophers so constantly and pathetically deplore. The faculties are present, they darkly stir and wistfully crave expression, but through deficiency of stimulus or opportunity they never

emerge. How often has it been seen that religion supplied the necessary light and warmth, and the dull plant flowered into the pride of the garden!

In other cases where character and talent are already in evidence, religious faith has imparted an excelling vivacity and richness. President Porter, in an address given at Yale on Dr. Bushnell, speaks thus of that truly eloquent theologian: "It was certainly true of Dr. Bushnell, that the more of a Christian he became, the more individual he was. Everything that was characteristic of him flourished in the sunshine of his faith. If Christ was his, everything was his, and most of all his living self. His faith also increased his energy. It stimulated his imagination. It gave it form and power. Before his new life of faith, the poet in him was scarcely known to himself. But after his eye was opened to those inspiring realities that engird and penetrate this world of sense, he found himself possessed of a poet's imagery and a poet's fervour. His literary resources were enlarged a hundredfold by the elevating power of his faith. His faith also increased his joy in nature. It softened his heart towards man. It kindled and sustained his public

spirit. It justified his ardent hopefulness in human progress by his faith in the resources provided for man in Christ. It stimulated his sympathy with men, and therefore made him more brilliant in conversation and more genial in society." This is not an extraordinary effect of a spiritual faith, but a striking instance of a common transformation. Thus universally does experimental godliness impart vivacity, elevation, expansiveness, and exuberance to the whole life of the believer.

It is quite remarkable that in late years some of the greatest discoveries in the terrestrial world have resulted from a better knowledge of the heavens. The most important advances in chemistry have been bound up with astronomy. "The brilliant discovery of helium by Ramsay gives us reason for hoping that a knowledge of the stars may in time show us how to look for and to find other substances which are all the while terrestrial, though we have not yet recognized them." [1] Thus science looks into the heavens for the interpretation of the earth; the stars open our eyes to the riches at our feet. So in all things of power and possession the race grows through fellowship with the

[1] Arthur R. Hinks, *Astronomy*.

highest. If history teaches anything, it teaches that the religious consciousness is the dynamic of civilization. Faith in the celestial, the divine, the eternal, expands the sphere of vision, stimulates the imagination, causes us to discern the grander meaning of things, calls out latent faculty, inspires hope, strength, and endeavour. As certainly as that the telescope indirectly reveals the secret riches of the earth and makes manifest its glory, so does faith in higher worlds bring to light the hidden wealth of human nature, and prompt men and nations to reach unascended heights.

Nowhere is genius and its splendid creations more sincerely appreciated than in the Christian Church, and nowhere do men strive more enthusiastically to make the best of themselves, to emulate the first patterns, to excel in their vocation whatever it may be. The scoffer to whom we so often refer tells us that "The Will to Power ought to be the fundamental article of our creed. What is good? All that elevates, the sense of power, the will to power, and power itself. What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power increases, that resistance is being overcome." This *is* a fundamental article of

our creed. We covet earnestly the greater gifts ; we are ambitious to perfect all the powers of our personality, to acquire the full rank by Heaven assigned us. We deprecate weakness, defectiveness, ineffectiveness. Power of all kinds, regulated by right and directed to noble uses, is our ideal.

The difference, however, is vast between the world's coveting and that of the saints. With its sanction of whatever is great, beautiful, and precious, revelation discovers truths and imposes laws which preserve covetousness from base admixtures and dire consequences. Having freely approved the fruitful principle, it safeguards it. If "the laws of disease are the laws of health masked," it is the work of grace to remove the frightful mask, and to restore the laws of health to their natural, beautiful, and beneficent operation.

By *showing the existence of something higher than the greater gifts* revelation conserves the purity of covetousness. In the reckoning of the carnal mind nothing surpasses knowledge, eloquence, philosophy, beauty, wealth, pleasure. The aristocracy of intellect and power must be considered free from moral obligation. This assumption leads to the most serious results.

Taking it for granted that nothing transcends intellectual and social greatness, aspiration forthwith becomes a corrupting quantity, breeding vanity, arrogance, selfishness, injustice, and general lawlessness. After enumerating with admiration the rare gifts of a privileged age, St. Paul concludes the chapter with this startling promise, "A still more excellent way show I unto you." Or, as otherwise rendered, "And now I will point out to you a way of life which transcends all others." [1] This promise is abundantly fulfilled in the following chapter. In glowing language he celebrates the incomparable beauty and preciousness of love; the glory of the grace that suffers long and is kind, that envieth not, that is modest, expressing itself in all seemliness of behaviour, that thinketh no evil, rejoicing only in truth, righteousness, and gentleness. This refinement of character, this grace of life, transcends the most splendid gifts of men and angels. The island of Ceylon abounds in precious stones beyond all lands, they are readily found in the greatest variety and beauty, but the diamond is lacking. The Greeks have dazzled the ages with the number and brilliance of their mental gifts; but they

[1] Arthur S. Way, *Letters of St. Paul.*

did not perceive the supreme worth of righteousness, the crown jewel that sanctifies all the rest, and history records their failure. The apostle supplies the deficiency. He declares that the supreme law of life, that by which all endowments and achievements must be bounded and governed, is the moral law as expounded by our Lord. That the gifts of genius cannot be accepted as substitutes for the graces, that the most superb powers are vain divorced from righteousness, is the uncompromising doctrine of St. Paul, and of revelation throughout, no matter what offence such doctrine may occasion the princes of this world. So long as our talents are controlled by the spirit of holiness, all is well; no sooner, however, do we disown the supremacy of moral obligation than degeneration sets in, and the corruption of the best becomes the worst.

The Christian faith preserves the purity of desire by *insisting on the high worth of inferior gifts and service.* The antichristian temper soon creates in men of superior parts the ugly habit of looking down with contempt on their humbler brethren. Says Nietzsche, "The weak and defective shall go to the wall: that is the first principle of our charity. And we must

help them to go." He served in the Ambulance Department during the Franco-German War; but as the philosopher developed, he forsook the battlefield and left the stricken to the wolves. The science of our day inculcates another lesson. It delights to bring out the immense significance of the ordinary, of the unconsidered trifles of nature. Whilst analysing the sun, it lectures on the wonders of a candle; revealing the mystery of a diamond, it unveils the apocalypse of a pebble; fascinated by the marvels of the orchid, it yet waxes eloquent concerning the hyssop on the wall. Bates anticipates the solution of dark physiological problems by a better knowledge of the butterfly. Bateson, "taking certain phenomena discovered in the sweet pea, showed that they might have a direct bearing on a problem so important as that of the nature of sex." Lovers of nature know that nothing of all her contents but must be held in reverence; that the grandeur of the whole is expressed in the meanest, minutest fragment, if one only knows how to interpret it.

What science has learned respecting nature, St. Paul discerned concerning humanity. In an age when brilliant scholar and empurpled noble dismissed the humble with scorn, the

apostle recognized the indispensability and honourableness of the lowly, and did them sincerest homage. The instructed Christian discriminates and variously appraises the vast variety of gifts with which humanity is dowered. He knows that the power to paint the picture is of a higher grade than the strength that grinds the colours ; that the invention of the architect excels the service of the hodman ; that the mastery of the pen implies a superior faculty to that involved in the driving of a plough ; and that the trained sense that steers the ship is more than the simple industry that sweeps the deck. All this is fully understood, whilst yet the inferior gift and service are equally honoured with the most splendid. As the scientist without inconsistency embraces great and small in a catholic admiration, so all who have the mind of Christ, without contradiction or paradox, reverence the ten-talented and the one. All gifts of thought, utterance, or craftsmanship are boons of the same Lord, they are divided severally as He will, and amid all diversities of working one divine control prevails ; thus the illustrious shine without egotism and the humble serve without shame. So long as the stewardship is faithfully discharged, none may

be puffed up, none humiliated. Thus whilst the faith of Christ stimulates ambition, it restrains it from becoming wild.

Acting in the Christian spirit *we are enthused with desire for the greater gifts without envying those who already possess such gifts.* According to Emerson, " Envy seeks an impossible thing, viz. to draw another man's good to itself." The savage, having dispatched his foe, proceeds to eat his heart to acquire his bravery, to eat his eyes to acquire increased power of vision, the powers of the slain being supposed to pass into the destroyer ; thus envious criticism is a social cannibalism in which the malignant vainly fancy to acquire the good and glory they do their best to destroy. They foolishly imagine that some way or other they will possess themselves of another's good. But in the light of scriptural teaching we come to see that all gifts are of God, that in Him they exist in infinite fullness, and therefore there is no room for mutual jealousy. Finding ourselves at the fountain of power and beauty, of wisdom and joy, no motive exists for spoiling our neighbour. On the shore of the immeasurable sea, we begrudge no man his cup, however it overflows. We conceive a pure love for great and lovely

things themselves, not for the sake of any paltry social gratification they may bring, and vaingloriousness is excluded. Knowing the infinite richness of all beatitudes in the fellowship of God, we no more envy our brother his good than we begrudge him his portion in the air, his share in the sun, or his inheritance in heaven's rain and dew. The lofty conceptions of the New Testament touching the wealth of the saints in God forbid that they should envy one another. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Vaingloriousness and selfishness are effectually eliminated by the doctrine that all our gifts are for the common profit. Wherever the selfish spirit prevails, vicious covetousness springs rankly; but where social duty is understood as expounded in this chapter, enlarged desire can work no mischief either to the individual or the community. Nay, the common thirsting for personal perfection, the striving for high ideals and great things, can only enhance the general good and happiness. The social temper disciplines all passions, and among the rest the passion to excel. Oriental jungles produce flowers whose peculiar sweetness approaches nauseousness; but when their scent mingles

with the rest, the compound is singularly rich and acceptable. Thus men who, so far as they affect isolation, create unhappiness for themselves and others, in social sympathy and service complete their own felicity and enrich the ampler air. Whatever may be the nature and degree of our endowments, they must prove a blessing to all concerned, whilst devoted to the service of God and humanity; the more our gift is magnified, the more the blessing is intensified.

In her poem entitled, "A Musical Instrument," Mrs. Browning, of course, intends to teach, by the great god Pan hacking and hewing with his hard bleak steel at the patient reed from the river until not a sign of a leaf was left, that the poet is fashioned through suffering; but she seems to suggest also that the man is marred in the process of making the poet. Let this be as it may, the man is not lost in the saint, nor is he mutilated in the transformation. Every original gift is evoked by the power, sublimated by the grace of Christ; the saint grows into a perfect man, everything concerning him receives the last touch; and straining after the highest prizes of life and destiny, he attains them.

IN PRAISE OF JEALOUSY

"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy."—2 Cor. xi. 2.

THE main idea conveyed by the word "jealousy" is that of a morbid sensitiveness lest we be deprived of something to which we suppose ourselves entitled, a painful solicitude lest we be outshone by the genius, beauty, or fortune of another. How ugly a thing it is! It is not necessarily ignoble, as we hope to show, but the temper as thus defined and commonly known is peculiarly base. No word in the language is more indicative of the malign and unlovely. It immediately suggests an exaggerated egotism, a readiness to infer the worst concerning men, a disposition to interpret trifles ungenerously, to begrudge the success of our comrades, to taste a secret satisfaction in their failure. The hatefulness of the vice that sickens at the sight of a neighbour's ability, renown, esteem, or prosperous

estate, is universally recognized. How full of misery is this gloomy passion! It is the source of self-torment beyond all the vices, and its deleterious influence upon character is swift and fatal. Science reminds us that when cultivated artificially in glass boxes, a colony of disease germs would, in process of time, exhaust all the food material in the test-tube; but long before it has exhausted the food it will itself become diseased and die, poisoned by its own waste excretions. A vivid picture of the suicidal action of bad qualities within the human breast, especially that of the morbid quality under consideration. Base emotions recoil upon themselves; they are self-tormented in the poisoned atmosphere they create, and, because in this case they cannot die, continue to grow into intenser venom and misery. "A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; but jealousy is the rottenness of the bones." It no sooner infects the soul than it destroys the very possibility of joyfulness; "bitter envying" pervades the whole life with bitterness. The jaundiced eye is at once the cause and sign of an ulcerated soul. How fatal is this passion!—fatal to those who cherish it, for it will transform the noble into monsters; fatal too often to the

reputation, happiness, and health of those who innocently excite it. The lives of the most gifted and delightful of mankind have been blasted by base envy, as the gutter sparrows tore to pieces the splendid butterflies recently introduced by the authorities into Battersea Park. In many tragic forms does the hateful passion sate itself. Charles Reade is correct, "The jealous always thirst for blood."

Yet, look where we may, signs of the evil thing abound; it seems to vitiate the whole creation. Naturalists note how the various vices of society reappear in the animal world, and jealousy perhaps most grossly and frequently. In their wild state animals eye each other, and, if they dare, snatch from each other any bit of good luck; and in a state of domestication they snarl at their fortunate fellow to whom falls a crumb of favouritism or fortune. The grudging of the animal is only slightly, if at all, modified in the savage; jealousy cruel as the grave is his most habitual passion. The higher strata of humanity are seamed with the same darkness. In the most civilized society the virus is active. Even the very greatest of men are not free from it. In them it attains refined expression, yet its quality and working cannot

be mistaken. Millet and Corot did not appreciate each other's work. Buffon could not conceal the jealousy with which the glory of Linnæus inspired him. Rousseau was the special object of Voltaire's hatred. Scarcely any two great musicians can tolerate each other. And we are told that whilst Doré entertained sympathy for every one outside his own profession, he never heard of any other artist's success without brooding over it jealously and unhappily. So intellectual masters exclude one another, as roses and mignonette refuse to live together in the same vase. To a given extent this antipathy may arise from intellectual limitations, but that the moral fault is present is beyond question.

All this cannot be taken into account without our becoming conscious that in treating of jealousy we are not dealing with an evil foreign to nature, but with one whose pervasiveness and persistency prove that its roots are in the constitution of things, and that in the last analysis it must be identified with some impulse or quality of our primitive, essential, and indestructible being. Professor Thomson refers sympathetically to "a deep-reaching theory which regards disease as a perturbation containing no elements essentially different from those

of health, but elements presented in a different and less useful order." [1] Much the same may be said concerning moral disease; it is a perturbation containing no elements essentially different from those of health, none alien to our spiritual organization, but elements exaggerated, vitiated, falsely related, misdirected. Such was St. Paul's theory of the moral disease he combated; he did not even shrink from recognizing the validity of jealousy and assigning it a place in the renewed nature and in the holiest life.

Jealousy in St. Paul, however, has put on a totally new character, it has suffered the most wonderful change that a universe of change may know. The anarchic elements have been purified, sublimed, harmonized, reduced to their true order, the most useful and beautiful order. It is of first importance that we satisfy ourselves that the jealousy of the apostle is not the old passion in a new form, or in a diminished degree, or more austerely regulated, but a passion radically changed. A recent writer on science alleges that many cases may be quoted to show how general seems to be the law that something evil is an excellent stimulus if administered only

[1] *The Biology of the Seasons.*

in small portions. Several poisonous mineral salts, when given in minute quantities, stimulate the growth of certain fungi. Growing peas watered with minute doses of copper sulphate are distinctly improved and grow more rapidly than usual, whilst a slight increase of the solution destroys the plant. Ether is found exceedingly useful in inducing the lilac to flower before the usual period, although a distinct poison when in excess. As regards electricity, and even extremes of temperature, it seems to be true that an evil in small doses is an excellent stimulus, whereas a little too much is fatal. More Christians than we might at first suppose entertain the notion that a bit of the old carnality left in the regenerate works beneficially. Not too much, but just a spice of the former self and the godless days being retained will, it is surmised, in some mysterious manner subserve the nobler life. Need it be said that this is not the view of the apostle. When he excites our "ambition," sanctions our "anger," provokes us to "covet," allures us with "guile," moves us to "jealousy," he is not thinking of homœopathic doses of the old vices popularly known by these names; he has solely in view the appetites and motions of the soul purged of

every impurity, actuated only by high ideals, directed to ends wholly beautiful and blessed. Where the kingdom of heaven works like a leaven, it designs to expel the latest particle of the corrupt affections of unregenerate nature, and to assimilate all the inalienable contents of the soul to its own divine nature. The thought of the apostle is not to mar the soul, but to redeem it from every disordering factor, that it may be presented in its integrity to Him in whose pure image it was first created.

Note, then, the essential distinction between the noxious passion of the unregenerate and the principle of the new life in Christ Jesus. St. Paul declares it in one pregnant sentence: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy," or, as in the margin, "with a jealousy of God." This recalls the fact that the state of mind indicated by the much suspected word exists in Him who is light and in whom is no darkness at all. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep my commandments." St. Paul dares to say that his jealousy is *like that* of God. "I am

jealous over you with a jealousy *which God has*; which is no human passion, but an emotion belonging to God, which I therefore have in common with Him."[1] The animal, the barbarian, the fiendish temper, was restored to its pristine purity, changed into the divine. "Where sin abounded grace doth much more abound."

What, then, is the jealousy that God has, and that He inspires in His consecrated ones? First of all, it is *moral*. The jealousy that taints the breast of men consists mainly in a sensitive regard to their material and temporal interests. They are disturbed lest their neighbour surpass them in wealth, distinction, or pleasure. They eat out their heart to see their compeers get beyond them in intellectual, social, or material renown. This is generally true of the sordid passion, and how large its scope! An American writer maintains that envy is the national curse of his country. "May not the outward sadness of the American race and its adopted sisters and brothers be found in the discontent which makes each envy the goods and place of others? This unrest has infected every rank of American society, until

[1] Meyer.

the only happy people among the poor in this country are to be found among the new arrivals from the other side of the Atlantic." It is difficult to believe that envy is more developed among the Americans than it is here. If the writer of this were to change his residence, he might change his opinion. Many members of our higher classes find their bitterest experience in their inability to keep pace with more fortunate neighbours, and we may well believe that much of what masquerades amongst the democracy as political discontent is simply envy of those who are higher up. It is enough; the race in all its branches and grades reveals this detestable vice: a fierce selfishness that eats out its own heart at the sight of another's aggrandizement. There can, of course, be nothing of this in God. "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds: for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof" (Ps. l. 9-12). The jealousy of God is a solicitude for truth, purity, justice, righteousness. He is alive with a sensibility to holiness

altogether beyond our utmost conception. This is manifested by the Decalogue itself. No sooner has the Lawgiver declared Himself a jealous God, than He proceeds to show in what sense this attribute belongs to Him. The tenth commandment, forbidding envy and covetousness in His people, makes it clear that His jealousy is not of that order. Indeed the ten commandments are so many definitions of the noble perfection of jealousy as it exists in Him. He is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity. He is concerned lest the darkness should invade His light, or dim the glory and joy of His children. "God is great," and His supreme greatness is expressed in His goodness and righteousness.

Professor J. P. Mahaffy, in describing the character of the modern Greek, accentuates his jealousy. He is so doubtful of the elevation of his kindred that he prefers to be governed by a foreigner. "I think jealousy no accidental feature, but one specially engrained in the texture of Greek nature from the earliest times. Nothing can be a more striking or cogent proof of this than the way in which Herodotus sets down jealousy as one of the attributes of the Deity. For the deities of all nations being

conceptions formed after the analogy of human nature around them, there can be no doubt that the honest historian put it down as a necessary factor in the course and constitution of nature."[1] But whilst Jehovah was known as a jealous God equally with the deities of the various surrounding nations, how great was the difference that existed between the two as to the nature of the jealousy imputed to them! Jealousy in the estimate of the Greek was an apprehension of being outdone by another, and therefore the jealousy they imputed to the gods was a suspicion lest fortunate mortals should wax too strong, glorious, or beautiful, and eventually challenge their godships. The conception that the Holy One of Israel was a jealous God had nothing in common with this. The Lord of Hosts was mindful of His purity, as we speak of a man being jealous for his honour; and He was solicitous concerning Israel, lest by departing from Him it should renounce the righteousness with which its glory and joy were bound up. Herodotus was right in recognizing jealousy as "a necessary factor in the course and constitution of nature," but it was not given to him as to Moses to perceive the essen-

[1] *Rambles and Studies in Greece.*

tial nature of this factor, namely, that the design of the divine government was the elevation and felicity of all creatures, and that this design could be reached only through the stern maintenance of truth, justice, and love.

The jealousy of St. Paul was like that of Jehovah. He recognized that the real glory of humanity is in moral character. He coveted no man's silver, gold, or raiment. As the dragonfly wantonly tears to pieces the lovely butterfly, so does malign jealousy wrathfully eye, and if possible mar, whatever appears of excelling beauty, worth, or fortune that it cannot secure for itself. No spark of this impure fire smouldered in the breast of St. Paul. He was jealous about himself, but jealous in a widely different and far higher sense than that in which the men of this world are jealous. The fundamental source of jealousy is self-respect; it springs from a secret consciousness of personal dignity, and in its very essence is nothing else than misgiving lest due justice should not be done to that dignity. Now, the apostle understood that his self-respect was best consulted, not by rivalling the rich, the famous, or the brilliant, but by realizing his personality in the power of righteousness, and by forbidding

in his heart or life whatever was inconsistent with his high calling. The baser jealousy was therefore impossible to one obsessed by such an ideal. Clothed in a purity whiter than any fuller on earth can whiten, he envied no gay clothing; rich in the treasures that wax not old, corruptible things, such as silver and gold, were powerless to elicit his desire; approved by conscience, no applause of men deflected his course; enamoured of the graces, material beauty failed to ensnare; a candidate for the crown of righteousness, no other garland appealed to his ambition. He was exacting toward himself lest in any wise he should fall short of the high possibilities of the soul, but so long as he consciously grew toward this perfection nothing terrestrial moved him to envy. He was jealous for others in precisely the same sense. In no wise troubled about the glory of the Church so far as concerned its worldly wealth or social influence, he yearned that it might become assimilated to the glory of its Master. He was jealous for its purity. The same motive made him jealous for its faith. "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to

Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3). It was no haughtiness of self-opinion, no pride of self-will, that prompted him so passionately to vindicate the faith, but the absolute assurance that fidelity to the doctrine was essential to practical righteousness.

Again, the jealousy of God is *social* and *sacrificial.* He is not jealous of another, for to Him there is no other; He is concerned for His people lest they forfeit glory and peace through forsaking Him. He is fearful lest His children should pitch their love elsewhere than on Himself, or yield obedience to any alien master, because their perfection and happiness were bound up with their faithfulness. Because of this He anxiously watches their movements. His jealousy is the expression of an infinitely tender love, and of a sublime regard for the welfare of His creatures. In this respect also the jealousy of St. Paul is a transcript of that of God. It hints no suspicion of pride, egotism, or carnal desire; it is sullied by no side glance at personal interest, popularity, or gratification: the deep love of his brethren and his impassioned

devotion to the kingdom of Christ alone provoke the apostle to jealousy. Jealousy in the natural man signifies an exaggerated personality, an egotism that would usurp the place and rights of others ; it is eminently anti-social, in its pride and injustice pushing the sense of personal privilege to cruel extremes, exaggerating self-respect into tyranny, and, as far as that is possible to it, sacrificing to its blind vanity the liberties and happiness of whomsoever may even innocently provoke it. How absolutely different the jealousy of St. Paul! He knew and valued his social, civil, and ecclesiastical rights, and on occasion firmly vindicated them ; yet these claims were always subordinated to his master passion—the service of humanity. He was not jealous *of* the people, but *for* them —jealous for their welfare, for their profoundest welfare. He contended so hotly for the truth, pleaded so eloquently for spiritual righteousness, dwelt so insistently on the great hope of immortality, and gloried so boldly in the Cross, because of his overwhelming conviction that the salvation of men was involved in the evangelical doctrine, and he resisted any deviation from that doctrine because he knew how it imperilled that salvation. He was jealous for

the fidelity and purity of the Church, because in it was guaranteed the redemption and hope of man, and not from any motive of private regard. "So the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy" (Zech. i. 14). The apostle shared this divine jealousy. The advancement of Christ's kingdom was dearer to him than life, and accordingly he was tremblingly alive to whatever might obscure the doctrine of Christ or jeopardize His Church. "Godly jealousy" is love's purest, intensest flame. Thus in St. Paul, self vanished and his whole being pulsated with a great sacrificial passion for the glory of God in the salvation of men.

So jealousy, which expresses the utmost vitality and alertness of our nature, the sensibility indicative of an energetic soul, is not excluded by the faith of Christ; but, stripped of its repulsive character, it is raised to a higher plane, baptized into a purer service, receives a truer direction, is regulated by a diviner principle, is transfigured into the heavenly. Nowhere is the sensibility to personal honour more acute than in the saints. Without exaggerating

their claims, they do not ignore the poet's admonition :

> Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin
> As self-neglecting.

It is a pure caricature to represent the Christian as a poltroon on whom any one may trample. Yet how profound the change that the principle of jealousy has undergone ! So far from being a purely selfish instinct, it has become social and altruistic. So far from begrudging our neighbour's promotion, it welcomes it. So far from filling the breast with dark and cruel emotions, it creates the purest joy of which we are capable. The old depraved passion is lost in the beauty of the new, as the charcoal is lost sight of in the diamond.

This " godly jealousy " should find its first exercise over ourselves. The knowledge of our mortality keeps alive within us a certain watchfulness concerning our physical health, so that we readily mark the " premonitory symptoms of nature's displeasure " ; and the supervision of our moral state ought to be attended with a sacred anxiety that will render us quick to discern the first signs of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. St. Paul

was not insensible to any social rights or civic prerogatives that pertained to him; but whilst he glances at these as circumstances might determine, his writings show that he was a hundred times more scrupulous about his character, and that no man should take his crown. If jealousy is the sentinel of our personal rights, the custodian of our honour and greatness, let us be sternly circumspect in maintaining strong and unsullied that personal purity which implies infinitely more than society can either give or take away.

The family circle gives large room for the play of sacred jealousy. Job furnishes a striking illustration of parental affection mingled with holy fear. "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually" (i. 5). The patriarch was nobly apprehensive lest his children might in some hidden way have compromised themselves. As the camera is said to record the spots of incipient fever long before they become apparent to the

eye, so there is a supersensitiveness in affection to detect in those whom they love the first faint signs of moral indecision and drifting. Brothers and sisters do well to cultivate this "godly jealousy," which prompts thoughtfulness for mutual advantage. Alas! we too often see the odious contrary. The members of a family will eye each other with an eye whose green outmatches that of nature, sick lest one steal the slightest advantage over another. How essentially base it all is! Not a microbe of such corruption should pollute Christian feeling. To be sensitive about each other for each other's good, is the fiendish changed into the godlike. Virgil finely describes the solicitude and prescience of love:

> But soon the queen perceives the thin disguise,
> (What arts can blind a jealous woman's eyes?):
> She was the first to find the secret fraud,
> Before the fatal news was blazed abroad.
> Love the first motions of the lover hears,
> Quick to presage, and ev'n in safety fears.

In the Christian household the philosophy of the Roman poet ought to find its closest and highest application.

In society at large "godly jealousy" may find a great ministry. Sincere desire to serve

our fellows in the best things will beget in us a gracious anxiety concerning them. A legitimate jealousy may be felt by us as members of the community lest any should occupy our ground, take our trade, impair our independence, come between the wind and our nobility; but the devout ought to know a jealousy that far transcends this. How intense was the passion of St. Paul to serve his generation! How jealous that their highest interests should be studied and secured! "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4). Let us rejoice in the successes of our compeers, be proud in their honours, generous in their praise; and so far from begrudging them the material prizes they win, let us do our ingenious best that they may also attain the first prize of all. The Christian jealousy that is unwearied in its watchfulness and care to add to the world's prosperity in all things, and especially in the highest, will do far more for those who exercise it than the morose temper that frets over another's promotion and happiness.

Not least is the call for this virtue in the Church of God. Our love to the truth should be so fervid that we view with alarm any levity

in its treatment. Lately it has been the fashion to discuss Christian doctrine lightly, as though the creed might be one thing or another without any serious consequences, according to the fashion, that is, the caprice of the day. The main question is the ethical one, and so long as duty is preached it matters little about doctrine. We may play fast and loose with the articles of belief with impunity. The New Testament does not regard the matter in this light. Practical righteousness is invariably and vehemently enforced, yet the underlying truths which give to righteousness validity and vitality are at the same time passionately urged. It is alike unscriptural and unphilosophical to depreciate belief. Would that the doctrinal jealousy of St. Paul and St. John might once more seize the Church! We need to be jealous lest Zion suffer an impaired spirituality. The sense of an encroaching worldliness ought to pain us like a wound. The enemies of the faith accuse us of allowing ourselves to be infected with "the disease of otherworldliness," and recall us to the claims of secularism. We listen to them far too deferentially. In the Spanish story the impious man who is turned into stone is in an agony as he feels the cold grit gradually stealing

upon his vitals and quenching his life. A not less terrible distress ought to take possession of the spiritual as they are conscious of the creeping secularization of the Church that is nothing if not supernatural. A "godly" jealousy is the crying need of the moment. We ought, finally, to give ourselves no rest lest Zion should compromise her purity or abate her zeal. Such godly fear on the part of her watchmen becomes to her a wall of fire.

Even when originating in the purest motives and intent on the best ends, the righteous may remind themselves that the great passions are attended by extreme peril. The same fountain may not yield sweet waters and bitter, but the sweet waters may become bitter. Out of the same glorious flowers, violets, roses, tulips, orange blossoms, and anemones, which yield the Riviera perfumer the rarest fragrances of the world, he also extracts prussic acid. So close together in nature lie the deadly and the delightful. But in the human heart the precious and the pestilent are even more mysteriously commingled. The best promptings of a true soul may issue in widely contrasted consequences. Love may change into sinful anger, conscientiousness degenerate into irritating

scrupulosity, a noble jealousy into unreasonable wrath. We see in Othello to what tragic transformations the purest passions are liable. In self-vigilance we must beware of a poisonous morbidity. In the oversight of others suspicion and intolerance must be shunned. And in caring for the orthodoxy and purity of the Church it is needful to be on guard against bigotry and injustice. The Inquisition proves how far pure passions may corrupt. St. Paul's homily on charity must bound and regulate his incitement to jealousy. The great passions lose their dangerousness balanced and harmonized in full-orbed Christian truth.

IN PRAISE OF GUILE

"But be it so, I did not myself burden you; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile."—2 Cor. xii. 16.

ST. PAUL was called to suffer one of the bitterest trials that can exercise great souls, viz. that whilst they are acting from the purest motives, in service entirely disinterested, they are accused of adopting dishonourable manœuvres for personal, mercenary ends. The apostle was charged with promoting his private interests in the oversight of the Churches; and, becoming yet more outrageous, his adversaries insinuate that, though he himself did not prove burdensome to them, he contrived cunningly to exploit them by means of his agents. Thus, whilst ministering in holy things with entire single-mindedness, the devoted servant of Christ and of His Church was denounced as a self-seeking adventurer who sought to defraud his brethren as a hunter seeks to entrap the prey.

This impeachment is met with a downright indignant denial. The text is not an admission of guilt; it simply states the libel that it may the more easily be refuted. The apostle confidently affirms that not only in his own person, but also by his messengers, he has striven to serve the best interests of the flock committed to him, and that whatever has been done by him or by his authority was inspired by absolute disinterestedness. "Only the nightingale understands the rose," is the dictum of the Oriental. Only those of the finest quality, of the rarest genius, are able to appreciate highest beauty and worth. This is specially true in the moral sphere. Men of inferior wisdom, coarser fibre, and cruder goodness cannot comprehend the nobleness that does all for love, and finds its exceeding great reward in the doing of it. St. Paul suffered from such critics, as did his Master before him.

Whilst, however, fully recognizing the sincerity of the apostle, it must be taken into consideration that his ministry and method presented features not unlikely to perplex ordinary critics. His administration was marked by a flexibility and an accommodativeness that might easily be misconstrued by on-

lookers who were ignorant of his unique enthusiasm and devotion. "And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof" (1 Cor. ix. 20-23). One whose ministry was thus versatile, whose method was thus diplomatic, was almost sure to be misinterpreted and to suffer accordingly. Nature knows sudden changes of colour. Some flowers undergo such changes several times in a day. Animals are sometimes susceptible of similarly rapid and strong variations. This fact and facility of colour-change is known to scientists as "chameleonism." This faculty of facile change is not uncommon in society, where sometimes it provokes a smile, oftener ridicule and contempt. The political world furnishes striking examples of the phenomenon, and it is

met with in most spheres. The apostle who thus describes his evangelical tactics might easily be suspected of a "chameleonism" provoking reproach. Yet he is not ashamed; on the contrary, he glories in the suppleness that exposes him to insult and persecution.

Let us seek a solution of this problem.

The extent to which guile prevails in nature—that is, the disposition to deceive, the art of deceiving with a view to injure and destroy—has surprised and shocked the modern naturalist. Many flowers ingeniously lure insects to their doom. Spiders secure victims by apeing the aspect of flowers. Birds of prey appear as "daintily-clad creatures, wearing pinions fit for angels' wings," whilst they carry out their ferocious quest with consummate knavery. Indeed the trickeries of nature to ends of robbery and violence are infinite. Drummond writes: "Carlyle, in his blackest visions of 'shams and humbugs' among human kind, never saw anything so finished in hypocrisy as the naturalist now finds in every tropical forest. There are to be seen creatures, not singly, but in tens of thousands, whose very appearance, down to the minutest spot and wrinkle, is an affront to truth, whose every attitude is a *pose* for a pur-

pose, and whose life is a sustained lie. Before these masterpieces of deception the most ingenious of human impositions are vulgar and transparent. Fraud is not only the great rule of life in a tropical forest, but the one condition of it." [1] Yet, however inclined Drummond may be to assign the palm for duplicity to the animal kingdom, it must be acknowledged that human society runs it very closely. How vulpine the devices of trade! How Machiavelian the diplomacies of politics! How beset is every walk of life with baited trap and crafty snare! It is the simple fact that the intellect of mankind has been largely trained in inventions and stratagems designed to defraud and destroy. What a vast multitude walk in the ways that are dark, and practise the tricks that are vain!

Does Christianity, then, seek to destroy the subtlety that reveals itself everywhere in creation, and to reduce the believer to a simplicity very nearly akin to childishness and imbecility? Is the ideal character one devoid of resourcefulness, artfulness, penetration, adroitness? Is the saint a Simple Simon? This is the view paraded by many of the critics of the faith.

[1] *South Africa.*

The present writer has just read the criticisms of a worldling upon the missionaries in a foreign land, whose action came under his observation. He is continually laughing at their dullness, stupidity, and gauchery. They do nothing without putting themselves into ridiculous situations. Their methods are uniformly maladroit. Boys from a pagan elementary school confute them. Their rawness, indexterity, and imprudence are pitiful. In fact, their habitual senselessness and silliness show the necessity for some provision being made for the feeble-minded. On the extent to which this view obtains in certain circles it is needless to enlarge. It is rarely the case that the missionaries are mentioned by the outsider without this scorn. And indeed the ineptitude of the pious, their inferiority in astuteness to the average man of the world, is a truism. Now, were this the fact, or anything like it, religion would sadly stand in need of an apology. A certain subtlety is the law of the inferior creation. However Drummond might be surprised and perplexed by the characteristic cunning of the tropical forest, he is bound to acknowledge that this insidiousness is " the one condition of it." Without such feigning and intrigue its

varied life and continuous evolution were impossible. Ages have sharpened the wit of bird and beast to finest issues, and the existence of creatures of all categories is dependent upon their acumen. Much the same skill and sapience is the condition of human civilization and progress. Acute intelligence alone conserves society and carries it onward to ultimate perfection. Alertness, suppleness, adaptiveness are imperative for success. This adroitness often expresses itself in the community, as in the forest, in revolting forms; but that the sharp sense, the quick eye, the keen wit, are essential to life and welfare is sufficiently patent. Had Christianity in any degree discouraged intellectual awareness and craftiness it would have discredited itself, for it would have declared its failure to take into account fundamental laws of the creation and of human nature.

This interpretation of the Christian faith is entirely refuted by the facts of the case. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless [margin, simple] as doves" (Matt. x. 16). In sending forth His disciples, the Master daringly chooses the creature that "was more subtle than any beast of the field which the

Lord God had made," to be the pattern according to which they should order their doing. The ancients selected the serpent as the elect symbol of slimness, and the modern naturalist accentuates their judgement. Coloured, striped, spotted so as closely to mimic the dead leaves amongst which it hides and glides, it is terribly inconspicuous, and its silent and subtle approach to its prey is scarcely paralleled for dangerousness in the whole creation. And this was the type the disciples were to emulate, so far as the craftiness of the creature was concerned! And our Lord felt that no contradiction was implied in combining the subtlety of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. " And He said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected " (Luke xiii. 32). The foxiness of Herod, prompted by a sinister mind and vitiated by a sordid purpose, our Lord reprobated with indignation; whilst the surpassing subtlety of the serpent, inspired by love and negotiating gracious ends, is proposed as the very ideal for His followers. It is plain that He had no thought of His people being simpletons, readily hoaxed, but that they should unite with purity

and beneficence of spirit the intellectual penetration and strategic skill of which His own life furnishes the most illustrious examples. St. Paul expresses the Master's spirit, and to the letter follows His instruction. "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some," is in exact correspondence with the precept with which our Lord sent forth His disciples. And this soundness of judgement and general manliness the apostle enjoins upon his brethren. "Do not become (*i.e.* make yourselves) little children in discernment; in respect of wickedness continue to be mere babies (*i.e.* incapable of it), but in discernment become (*i.e.* develop into) full-grown men" (Rom. xvi. 19). Everywhere in the Old Testament and the New the godly are represented, not as sickly sentimentalists and puerile blunderers, but as men of robust understanding, who with a noble Jesuitry comprehend the situation, and vindicate their own rights and those of mankind. Vinet justly remarks, "There is a profound as well as a superficial simplicity." "The wisdom of this world" and the policy of the designing wicked may, and often do, affect the aspect of profundity; yet is the bitter or condescending criticism so freely bestowed on the righteous

entirely gratuitous. "The depths of Satan," with their dark *seances*, perfidious counsels, and infinite juggleries, are really shallow. The simplicity of the honest is far more profound; at last it rarely fails to be manifest that the righteous are the acute.

Yet whilst revelation recognizes the fact that the diplomatic element is deeply rooted in nature, how immense the difference between the sinister craft of the world and the holy guile of St. Paul! Untruthfulness is of the very essence of the sinuosities and seductions of the former; on the other hand, the apostle never trifles with verity. It is entirely correct to say that even when the motive is good there can be no greater social disservice than to fail in truthfulness. "The well-meant lie builds up a sham world, whose ruins may bury the fool that planned it as well as the weakling for whom it was planned."[1] We may rest assured that for no end whatever did Paul sully his argument or action with the breath of falsehood. "The sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error," he sincerely despised, and loses no opportunity to condemn. Sophists who lie that good may come may not shelter themselves under his authority. As

1 Mackintosh, quoted by Alexander in *The Ethics of St. Paul.*

the skilful surgeon executes the operation which so nearly threatens a vital nerve yet without doing it injury, so the apostle divided and applied the truth with delicate discrimination, and without wounding it. As the guile of the apostle took no liberties with the truth, his casuistry was equally jealous of righteousness in its highest and broadest sense. Righteousness administered in love involves fine discriminations, exquisite refinements, concessions, and adaptations, the frequent use of illusions and dalliances, as may be seen any day in the nursery, whilst still the whole educational process is dominated by the strictest ideal of duty. So St. Paul, who represents himself as a nurse cherishing her children, knew how to humour the frailties and immaturities of the well-disposed, yet being faithful throughout to the holiness of the truth. The chicanery of the world implies an elastic conscience and the very mockery of principle, whilst the casuistry of the saints in its freest motions is still regulated by the law of eternal truth and right, justice and love. Finally, and decisively, whilst the guile of St. Paul yielded no jot of truth or righteousness, it was compromised by no trace of selfishness. He sought not his own profit, not the

wealth or popularity of the Church, but the spiritual profit of many. In a high sense he became eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, skilfully utilizing his superior gifts and insight that he might guide souls compassed with infirmity into the fullness of blessing. By manifold subtleties of love and ingenuities of zeal, he studied to save the weak, the ignorant, the perverse : to entrap them into glorious freedom, to despoil them into riches beyond rubies, to beguile them into safety, to lure them into blessedness, to ambush them into victory. Here is the grand distinction between the malignant artifice of nature and society and the diplomacy of goodness. It is the design of the faith of Christ to hallow the keener eye, the more dexterous touch, the swifter action ; instead of exploiting ignorance and misfortune, as is the wont of carnal cleverness, the more richly gifted shall devise and labour for the salvation of the morally blind and foolish. The subtlety of sympathy is substituted for the craftiness of selfishness.

In the Epistle to Philemon we have the best possible example of the very perfection of this delicate style of treatment. Critics of all schools agree that this epistle is alike admirable in its

spirit and skilfulness. "All the charm of a unique personality is shed over these few lines of St. Paul's: Christian feeling is combined with Greek delicacy and the tact of a man of the world. Though a prisoner, St. Paul writes with perfect calmness; a blissful good-humour beams from his eye, he opens the treasures of his confidence, appeals to brotherly love and love of the Saviour, and knows that these powers are irresistible. Yet there is not a trace of triviality in the treatment of a subject that in itself is trivial, not a word is without its significance, a strong and yet elastic soul is revealing itself to the trusted friend." [1] Here the wiliness of the serpent and the hues of the dove delightfully blend. Artifice cannot farther go, the writer beguiles his correspondent in the insinuations of the most delicate nuances, and yet all is in perfect honesty and nobleness. Francis Thompson writes:

> To wisest moralists 'tis but given
> To work rough border-law of Heaven,
> Within this narrow life of ours,
> These marches 'twixt delimitless Powers.

Yet certainly the highest law was never more exactly defined and illustrated than in this

[1] Deissmann, *St. Paul.*

epistle, where artifice never lapses into sophistry, and the most skilful shading only does the more justice to truth and love.

What a glorious transformation of human nature does this beatification of guile imply! Vauvenargues writes: "Sincere virtue does not abandon its votaries, the very vices of a man well born may be turned to his glory." Yes, and the very vices of a man badly born may be turned to his glory. "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not any more be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel" (Gen. xxxv. 9, 10). The fierce ingenuity of Saul recommended him to the Sanhedrin as their chief detective; yet in the end he "became all things to all men that he might save some." Men are exceedingly "well born" when twice born—born of a woman, and born from above, as Israel was, as St. Paul was; for in this radical regeneration the vilest vice of human nature is converted into a supernal virtue. Through the heavenly grace the sharp practice of "the supplanter" is raised into a special aptness to bless; and the truculent dexterity of a per-

secutor suffers a change into the sublime sagacity and artfulness that seeks that it may save. A woman, having shot her husband, was condemned to death, but on account of extenuating circumstances the sentence was commuted into one of penal servitude for life. She begged to be allowed to make her own prison dress; this was granted, and she contrived to convert the broad arrow Government mark, which was on the stuff, into an elegant ornament for the front of her blouse. But the change wrought in patriarch and apostle was not the transformation of an ugly symbol into an ornament; it was a radical change of nature, the hallowing of the very essence of their depraved being into the quality of wisdom, love, and purity.

What a marvellous transformation does this suggest in regard to the social principle! One of the darkest traits of human nature transmuted into a benign faculty, contemplating only service and sacrifice for the social welfare. The guile that from time immemorial has been directed only to selfish and cruel ends, is by divine grace purged from all alloy, becoming gold seven times purified, devoted wholly to the sacred endeavour of saving men from the worst evils, saving them from themselves. What a

mighty and felicitous change does this reversal of the egoistic law imply! The strong bearing the burdens of the weak, the clever hastening to the rescue of the simple, the tactful giving the cue to the maladroit, the disciplined spreading their ægis over the inexperienced and exposed; all that is excelling in faculty, energy, intensity, and equipment exerted on behalf of those less endowed, of inferior strength, privilege, and circumstance. This is the world contemplated by the gospel of Jesus Christ! All the penetration, power, and patience which to-day are cryptically employed in selfish scheming, in plotting against one's neighbour, henceforth consecrated to the service of humanity in its feebler members. A sublime picture, indeed, against the dark background of the egotism and truculence of society and brute nature as we know them to-day. The ugliest words in the dictionary—cunning, insidiousness, device, duplicity, manœuvre, intrigue, and such-like—will become beautiful and poetic when once the law of love is established in the hearts of men. "And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den" (Isa. xi. 8).

Mark how in several directions we may apply the lesson of our meditation.

In the presentation and enforcement of Christian doctrine we may emulate the shrewdness of the apostle. His loyalty to the truth was beyond question. He scorned subterfuge and insincerity. He is troubled lest the Ephesians should be "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error" (iv. 14). To the Corinthians he boasts that he does not adulterate the truth. "We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 iv. 2). Yet with the sternest fidelity to the doctrine that he had received, we see how sensitive he was to the various distinctions existing among his hearers, and that in addressing them he was careful not to offend their racial and traditional susceptibilities. He kept in mind the several shades of difference existing in those who listened to him so that he might conciliate and convince. May not pastors and teachers remember with advantage the tactfulness of the apostle? Discrimination, often delicate discrimination, is essential to an effective ministry; and where it

is wanting, the most precious truths may fail to attract and persuade. The fowler knows the *finesse* necessary to capture the bird, the angler the deftness requisite to land the fish; and they who would "catch men" ought carefully to ponder the best methods of bewitching them with the truth. It is quite possible that the preacher may bait the trap with a crown, and yet speak so infelicitously as to scare away the quarry.

All entrusted with the training of character ought to be alive to a gracious artfulness. With what inventiveness, persuasiveness, seductiveness, does the wise mother elicit the senses and intelligence of the child! Thus the apostle treated many of his converts. "But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children" (1 Thess. ii. 7). Successful teachers coax their scholars into culture; and great masters of all arts by a variety of well-conceived illusions allure their pupils into capableness. It has often been shown that the evolution of the world is secured by illusions based in the nature of things, and it is certain that the carrying out of any educational system is largely secured by the smart and smoothing expedients of the tutor. Many

masters fail because they lack the guilefulness which elicits latent and lethargic talent; and they who succeed owe more perhaps to judicious enticements than to exceptional knowledge. Through the smiling stratagem of the sugar we swallow the healing medicine. The "frontal attack" of the well-meaning teacher may succeed, but "the way round" the ignorance and obtuseness of the scholar is far more likely to capture.

Wise consideration and adjustment are indispensable in every sphere. In the domestic life they are needed. Making allowance for frailties, appreciating singularity of temperament, suiting the lesson to the hour, hoping against hope, wooing, humouring the reluctant and perverse into better life, we achieve what is impossible to the stern rule that has no play in it. In the schoolroom, as we have noted, a kindly artfulness goes far to realize the most unpromising scholar. In the great outside world he who blends the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove wields hypnotic influence. In the Church the adroitness taught by love conciliates and allures without compromise with heresy, worldliness, or unrighteousness. There is a far wider range for innocent

dexterity than we generally think, and many of our failures are explained by the lack of the elasticity of perfected wisdom and virtue. And, as we have shown, all this is possible without any tampering with truth. Charles Reade describes persons who stuck at nothing to effect what they felt to be a good end: "They meant well; but for all that, every lie, great or small, is the brink of a precipice, the depth of which nothing but Omniscience can fathom." A warning never to be forgotten; on that precipice we ought not on any consideration to walk, and yet, without departing a hair's-breadth from veracity, we may hoodwink the erring into the brighter path. Without any unworthy *ruse* we may enter with men through their door, and bring them out at ours—the door into heaven.

In the recovery of the lapsed, the guilefulness that may also be called winsomeness is specially called for. As is well known, the queen of the ill-fated Maximilian of Mexico suffered mental failure. One day the unhappy woman wandered from her home, and it was found difficult to persuade her to return. Her maids, knowing her fondness for flowers, went before her strewing them on the pathway; the charmed

queen followed, picking up one bloom after another until she was again safe in the shelter of her retreat. With some such guile we best allure the prodigal back to his Father's house.

IN PRAISE OF REVENGE

"Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."—Rom. xii. 19, 20.

TO hear of the praiseworthiness of revenge gives one a shock, yet the text justly interpreted implies such eulogy. Moralists join in reprobating revenge as one of the very darkest passions of our imperfect nature. Lawgivers emphatically denounce the spirit of personal retaliation, and visit with severest penalties those who presume to avenge themselves. Historians show that the ghastliest tragedies of all time have been prompted by this cruel temper. Revelation brands it, as in our text. On every hand it is regarded as the most malignant of the passions.

Yet this impulse to vindicate ourselves, and to inflict suffering on those who wrong us, or who are supposed to have done so, is the expres-

sion of a principle deeply grounded in nature, and one whose workings may be traced from the lowest to the highest spheres. It is first revealed in the animal world. The wild tenants of forest and jungle brood over the injury they may have suffered, and wait for an opportunity to requite it. A recent traveller in the Sudan tells that when hunting buffaloes he shot an animal which disappeared in the long grass; following the spoor, plainly marked by drops of blood, he found that at a distance of sixty or seventy yards the creature had turned back for about ten yards, and a pool of blood indicated the place where it had waited for the hunter two yards from the old spoor. Another fifty yards and the same tactics had been repeated. At this point the animal had evidently paused for a few minutes, waited, and as nobody came had gone on. It had deliberately lain in wait for the hunter, and evidently there must have been reflection in the animal and a feeling for revenge. Sportsmen, acquainted with the habits of wild animals, are familiar with this trait. Seen so clearly in creatures standing thus near to nature, revenge is evidently a passion springing out of the constitution of things.

The passion is yet more luridly displayed in the savage. Murder, as prompted by the lust of vengeance, has become a fine art with the Red Indian, and with the native races of which he is the accepted type. The South Sea islanders were accustomed to suspend an article from the roof of their hut to keep in remembrance any wrong they had endured, waiting patiently for an opportunity to avenge themselves upon the offender. Indeed, it is not too much to say that it is part of the system of jurisprudence amongst all savages to inflict bloody vengeance upon the individual or tribe against whom their anger has been kindled. Vindictiveness is a distinctive feature of Oriental character. One of the Buddhist writings contains this direction, " Bear thy enemy on thy shoulder so long as the time (or opportunity) is not come ; but when the time is come, then break him like a potsherd upon a stone." This proverb well expresses the truculent genius of the East.

Duelling, which figured so largely in past days and which still survives, in its origin and persistence is explained by the desire of the combatants to inflict pain or death to avenge insult or injury. The private blood-feud, known under the name of vendetta, often

hereditary, in which a family seeks to avenge a wrong done one of its members, has been prevalent in Italy through generations, and is still practised. And the highest and purest civilization yet attained is dishonoured and afflicted by the presence of private malice wreaking vengeance in countless forms subtle or outrageous. As already said, this imperious impulse, springing from the depths of our nature, reveals an obstinate quality that must be permanently reckoned with.

What, then, is of the essence of this passion, and to what end has it been implanted in our nature? Lord Bacon defines revenge as "a kind of wild justice." Whilst he recognizes its lawlessness, he implies that it is grounded in the sense of justice. In the last analysis it is found to be an impulse to do justice to oneself, however illegitimate its expression may often be. Scholars tell us that the root idea of the Greek word translated in the text "avenge" is identical with the term justice, and implies getting justice out of a person. In other places the apostle uses the same word in this sense, viz. to re-establish a man's claim to something of which he has been unjustly deprived, it may be in the matter of reputation, property, liberty,

or otherwise. In the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul uses this word when writing of society vindicating itself : doing justice to itself through the action of the magistrate (xiii. 3, 4). Again, in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, he uses the same word in regard to the Church vindicating itself : doing justice to itself in the sight of God and society by putting away the person guilty of incest (vii. 11). And again, in this epistle the same word is repeated in respect of himself, whilst the apostle declares that he will in due season vindicate his claim to authority by crushing the factious remnant which troubled the Church in that city (x. 6). The Latin *revindicatio,* from which we get our word " revenge," had none of the evil significance implied in the debased, misused sense of our word as " paying out " an injury : that was expressed by *ultio.* We have taken from the Latin the nobler word, and with it we should not lose sight of the nobler sense. " Vengeance " and " revenge " have come to indicate an evil passion ; but in their primitive sense they implied, alike in Greek and Latin, the assertion of justice, self-respect, righteousness. Archbishop Trench, *On the Study of Words,* suggests that " vengeance " (with the verb " avenge ")

should be ascribed to God, while all in which our sinful passions are the impulsive motive should be exclusively termed "revenge." Whatever may be said for such a discrimination, it is clear that the root of both words is one and the same, and that its signification is moral and noble.

"Every vice is a virtue gone astray," is the declaration of one of the sacred books of the East; but how far astray this primitive virtue of vengeance has gone! If it once implied the assertion of justice, self-respect, and righteousness, what does it imply now? At the mention of vengeance we think only of egotism, treachery, lawlessness, bloodthirstiness, and of whatever is specially base and fiendish. The once noble thing can no longer be recognized, the angel of light has been transformed into a spirit of darkness without a redeeming attribute; the erstwhile pure gold has been mingled with base alloy, until no sparkle of its original glory remains. On the degeneration of words George Dawson observes, "As families who have started nobly often sink into ultimate badness, so it is with words. And nothing spoils words so much as use. If a noble word comes to be much used, the golden word, like a golden coin

which is much handled, becomes lessened in weight. Hardest gold is spoiled by softest touch. So the sweetest word, except it be nobly used, sinks down to the level of the user. Did one doubt the depravity of human nature, one could learn it out of the dictionary." Could we find a more striking illustration of this passage than in the degeneration that the word before us has suffered? "Vengeance" has fallen from original righteousness, and now signifies only a barbarous passion of which we are ashamed and afraid.

How, then, does the apostle propose to free this passion from impurity and misdirection, to vindicate and ennoble it, to convert what has been known as a repulsive vice into a pure and sublime passion? The fruit that we know as the peach was originally a poisonous almond, its fleshy parts being used to poison arrows, and for this purpose it was introduced into Persia. Transplantation and cultivation have, however, removed its poisonous qualities and produced the delicious fruit we now enjoy. A feeble metaphor this of the far more marvellous transformation which the apostle designs to effect, by converting a malign passion that for ages has poisoned cruellest shafts, into a

lovely grace whose magical arrows work consequences charming beyond all the miracles of Venus's fabled bow. What, then, is the philosophy of this delightful transformation? "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." St. Paul does not attempt to deal with the wild passion by propounding superficial, technical maxims; but, like his Master in the parables, penetrates to the heart of the problem in a bold, original, picturesque way. When Epictetus was asked how a man could best grieve his enemy, he answered, "by preparing himself to act in the noblest way." St. Paul sets forth that noblest way. By acts of forbearance, love, and sacrifice we are to reduce our enemy to penitence, and to bring about in him a worthier mind.

In the light of the text consider the influence of this true vengeance upon those who cherish it. Vengeance in the natural man connotes anger, malice, hatred, the sentiments and passions which degrade the character of those who cherish them; whilst the benevolent feelings enjoined by the text only purify and exalt. If, in its true sense, to avenge ourselves is to maintain our self-respect, to vindicate our

right and dignity, how effectually is this done by the generous conduct here prescribed! Yielding to malevolent impulse, we threaten, "I will be even with my adversary"; but following the apostolic counsel, we are more than even. As Lord Bacon presents it, "Certainly, in taking revenge a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon." He who exemplifies the text is known as "magnanimous"; he is great, truly great, royal. In doing good to our foe what ample justice we do ourselves! "Avenge not *yourselves*." Just as we eliminate the selfish element, dealing gently with the erring, giving them what does not belong to them, and what they have no legal right to expect, we vindicate most effectually our personal greatness, and secure most surely our right and prerogative. Nothing evinces the intrinsic glory of human nature, nothing enhances that glory, like acts of love and sacrifice. "Because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego." Once more, when we heap these ethereal coals of fire upon our brother's head, the fervent heat

is reflected back upon ourselves—only this time not to destroy, but to purify and transfigure.

Mark the influence of true vengeance as it affects the offender. As commonly understood and practised, revenge designs the injury and humiliation of the foe; but as interpreted in the text it seeks his welfare and ennoblement. "For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." The apostle does not suggest that by benignity we shall inflict upon the adversary torture of a more subtle and exquisite kind, and so cunningly gratify a secret malice; rather does it remind us that forbearance and magnanimity set up a purifying and exalting process in the breast of our foe. Johannes Weiss remarks, "The metaphor of the 'coals of fire' from the Proverbs adds a touch which clouds the purity of the motive expressed by Jesus."[1] We do not see this. Our Lord in His command in the Sermon on the Mount not to resist evil says nothing indeed about putting the transgressor to shame, but the command certainly implies that the magnanimous act will have this effect. St. Paul introduces no alien motive into the command given by Jesus, he simply expresses more fully the operation

[1] *Paul and Jesus.*

of the clement act upon the mind of the offender. The expression "heap coals," etc., is simply a picturesque Oriental metaphor for making a man's brow flush hot with shame and self-reproach. The shame that glows within and crimsons the cheek is designed only to cleanse and hallow. It exactly corresponds with the working set up in the soul of the penitent when he becomes conscious of the divine holiness and love; the goodness of God once realized leads to repentance, humility, contrition, and conversion. It is the burning shame that consumes foul thoughts and feelings, leaving only the pure gold of a clean heart. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. vi. 6, 7). These are the coals, the red-hot brands, kindled in fervent charity, which cleanse and melt the enemy into a brother.

How truly sublime is the New Testament conception! Balzac has written, "The finest revenge is the scorn of revenge." Excellent, but St. Paul goes much beyond it; teaching

us to overcome evil with good, superseding malicious wrath by a noble revenge, and making an unrighteous foe to acknowledge the power of goodness. The most fatal of all poisons in Central Africa was obtained from a caterpillar called the N'gwa, and it was used by the natives to poison their arrows. Livingstone informs us that the caterpillar itself mixed with grease was rubbed into the wound as an antidote. It has been recently reported that a physician of the University of Pennsylvania has succeeded in producing a substance called antivenius; that is, from the venom of certain deadly snakes he has extracted an antidote for their bite. Thus St. Paul discerned the soul of goodness in things evil, and found a healing virtue in the very passion which had hitherto worked death. Rescuing what was fundamentally good from a grievous perversion, he made it an antidote to the bitter and deadly poison that has wrought the race infinite mischief. The savage temper that degrades in a special degree the character of those who cherish it is converted into a pure passion exalting the whole being; the malignant quality that would sting an offender to death becomes a benign emotion contemplating only his salvation.

Lord Bacon affirms that "public revenges are for the most part fortunate; but in private revenges it is not so." Yet in contradiction to this great authority we may be confident that public revenges are no more legitimate, and no more fortunate, than private revenges are. It is often difficult to harmonize public with private morality; but we may be absolutely certain that national vindictiveness is equally guilty and fatal with individual reprisal, and that Christian nations ought to evince the utmost solicitude to avoid anything like revenge, just as the individual Christian is bound to exercise forbearance and forgiveness. In his recently published *Journal* Emerson writes, "I wish the Christian principle, the *ultra* principle of non-resistance and returning good for ill, might be tried fairly. William Penn made one trial. The world was not ripe, and yet it did well. . . . Still a man may try it in his own person, and even his sufferings by reason of it shall be its triumphs. Love is the adamantean shield that makes blows ridiculous. . . . One thing more, it is said that it strips the good man bare and leaves him to the whip and licence of pirates and butchers. But I suppose the exaltation of the general mind by

the influence of the principle will be a counteraction of the increased licence. Not any influence acts upon the highest man but a proportion of the same gets down to the lowest man Signboards speak of Titian." It is confessedly far from easy for patriotic statesmen always to be able to reconcile forbearance with the maintenance of national rights and safety; but they ought ever to cherish the humanitarian temper and apply it down to the latest possibility. The magnanimity that constitutes the highest distinction of the individual, and that works so blessedly in private life, cannot fail to justify itself on the wider scale of international life; and we may predict with confidence that the sovereign race of the future will prove the one that, having done whatever prudence dictated, dared to venture most on the divine principle enunciated in our text. That the memory of their enmities might be the more speedily obliterated, the Greeks erected their trophies of wood; Christian nations ought not to be less placable.

In what has been said respecting the exaltation of natural revenge into an ideal passion, we cannot but perceive the indispensability of moral discipline. A certain school of moralists

maintains that the only virtues worthy of esteem are natural virtues formed by free development; everything acquired by effort is pronounced false and dangerous, and perfection is attained only through the unrestricted play of the soul. The consideration of this powerful passion shows the falseness of such theory. If when a poisonous almond the peach had been left to itself, it would have remained fatally noxious, only in response to culture did it become a delicious fruit; and only through austere training do the instinctive appetites and desires become reasonable and righteous. To leave our nature to a direct, unrestrained development, to neglect direction and discipline, would appear to a dispassionate mind dangerous indeed. And historic facts would amply justify such solicitude. It was Rousseau who eloquently and plausibly argued for the free play of our impulses and passions; but the French Revolution following so soon on the promulgation of his doctrines tragically demonstrated their falseness. The cry of the ferocious painter David invoking the guillotine to grind "More red, more red," was the melancholy refutation of Rousseau's pretentious creed of direct and free fulfilment of the instinctive

desires and passions. The reign of terror showed all the world that so far from unbridled passion being the condition of perfection, it transformed men and women into the likeness of wild beasts. Yes, we need perpetually to watch, to direct, to deny the mighty forces latent in our breast. As Lord Bacon teaches, "Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out"; the more ought civil law to restrain its motions, the more firmly ought we to bring the moral law to bear upon the ebullitions of our own heart. The harsh, fiery, poisonous fruits of nature call for continual vigilance and resolution, and the infusion of a new sap, if they are to mature into beauty and sweetness.

The needed discipline of the soul is taught and supplied pre-eminently in the faith of Christ.

The powerful sanction given by the doctrine of the New Testament to our belief in the moral government of the world by satisfying our sense of justice and retribution chastens our wrath. "For it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." No need to take the law into our own hands, and to attempt to execute judgement upon the adver-

sary; the administration of justice is in better hands, and there may safely be left. The moral government of God as disclosed in the New Testament is specially reassuring to those who suffer gratuitous personal wrong. Not only is the generic truth taught that the Ruler of nations will judge the earth in righteousness, but, as Lecky has observed, Christianity has introduced the knowledge of a minute personal retribution which takes account of every private, individual injustice we are called to suffer. With the consciousness of innocence we may safely confide in the knowledge and faithfulness of the Almighty Judge to do ultimate justice to all concerned. Such a conviction is manifestly a powerful dissuasive against personal spitefulness and implacability.

The consciousness of the divine recognition and favour consoles and strengthens in an eminent degree the believing ones who suffer wrongfully. The Russian Emperor Nicholas was a staunch opponent of duelling. One day an aide-de-camp threw himself at the Emperor's feet, and begged as an extraordinary favour his sovereign's permission to fight a duel. The Emperor immediately and emphatically refused. "But, sire, I am dishonoured; I must fight,"

cried the disconsolate aide. The Czar frowned, and asked him what he meant. "I have been struck in the face," was the ready reply. "Well," said the Emperor, "for all that thou shalt not fight; but come—come with me." And taking him by the arm, the Emperor led him into the presence of his Court, assembled in an adjoining saloon. Then, in view of the flower of the realm, the mighty yet pacific Emperor kissed the cheek which had received the blow. "Go now," he exclaimed, "and be at peace; thy affront has been effaced." Is it not somewhat after this manner that the supreme Royalty blunts the edge of our anger and expels the revengeful thought? The sense of the heavenly approbation, the kiss of God, more than atones for whatever insult and injury we suffer in His cause. If the injustice of men arouses within us a keener sense of the love of God, if He smiles upon us, honours and blesses us, we feel ourselves richly compensated for whatever we may be called to endure for righteousness' sake. Was it not thus with the Master? The wrongs that He suffered at the hands of His generation were infinite, but they begat in Him no bitterness or hunger of revenge. He was sustained by the vivid knowledge of

the Father's complacency, by constant fellowship with approving Heaven, by the certainty of enhanced and eternal reward. Thus His patience and pitifulness never failed, He summoned no avenging angels, He threatened no malediction. When the crowning wrongs of Calvary broke His heart, the prayer started to His lips, " Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." Was it not thus with the first disciples ? The secret of their triumph over unexampled injustice and persecution was their clear sense of the sanction, favour, and sympathy of God. Experiencing the consolations of their Master, they too prayed in His spirit, " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." To be approved by the King before the flower of the universe atoned for all, leaving no motive for vengeance, no inclination toward it. So is it ever. The smitten cheek soothed by the salute of Eternal Love effectually solaces the pure in heart, chasing hence all rancorousness and the latest dream of revenge.

Finally, if our sense of the moral government of the world is strengthened by the gospel, our nature in no less degree is softened by its doctrine. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of love ; the very genius of Christianity is that of clemency,

compassion, patience, and conciliation. In Christ we apprehend the infinite love of God, and are made to understand somewhat our mighty debt to that love. This implies that our breast comes to reflect in some measure the glory of the Almighty grace. In the act of prayer the Persian lays aside his sword, feeling the unbecomingness of warlike symbols in the divine presence; how much more shall the Christian disciple dimiss every retaliatory imagination as he draws nigh the reprieving God! The Persian, putting aside his sword, is nearer the ideal than is the Christian "rattling the sabre." We are to lift up "holy hands" in worship, not "mailed fists." In His teaching the Master revealed love as the ideal passion and law of the believer's life, and His own example illustrated supremely and abundantly the loveliness and energy of the pacific virtues. Christ enveloped His Church in an atmosphere of love, and it is impossible to be a real member of His body whilst hatred and malice rankle in the heart.

The genuine saint is slow to take offence. The condor of Peru is so thickly coated with feathers that many bullets may strike without piercing it. Thus in unsuspicious and generous

temper, in the charity that thinketh no evil, in softness of spirit and grace of life, the saints are invulnerable to assaults and irritations which grievously exasperate men of an inferior spirit. When offence is real and painful, he who has drunk deeply of the Spirit of the Lord is quick to excuse and forgive, delighting in mercy. Yet the occasion may arise when the noblest must feel and express resentment and in some form penalize the offender; but this attitude will be the rare exception. Judgement is God's "strange work," and the strange work of those most like Him.

IN PRAISE OF ANGER

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."—Eph. iv. 26, 27.

THE dire effects of immoderate passion are so manifest that it is needless to attempt to prove or describe them, and there can be no wonder that anger is severely reprobated by the moralists. The injury worked by a blizzard is well understood; far and wide it sows the ravaged area with ruins—uprooted trees, wrecked homes, blasted harvests, and long after the landscape retains the scars of the visitation. Yet the results of what are sometimes called "brain-storms" are frequently far more disastrous. The influence of inordinate temper upon those who cherish it is invariably most hurtful. It tells prejudicially upon the body, as other intoxication does; according to its violence it impairs the delicacies of the nervous system, whilst its pernicious action

upon the mental and moral faculties is equally real and far more serious. In fact, excessive vehemence of feeling is a demoralization of the whole being. The injustice done our neighbour and the needless pain inflicted upon him by our wrath are both incalculable. Extreme heat or extreme cold equally blisters; and the insults of a paroxysm or the sarcasm of contempt may alike irretrievably wound and entail untold suffering. One moment of self-forgetfulness and temper not rarely occasions the most intense personal mortification, inflicts scars that it takes years to heal, and perchance spoils the peace of a lifetime. The ungovernable passion works in society the most terrible mischief and misery. Well may the apostle so nearly associate anger with the devil and the incendiarism of hell.

Yet St. Paul in the text before us certainly gives a sanction to anger, allows it a legitimate place in human character and life. There is an anger that is sin, and that as such is to be guarded against, as we see in the thirty-first verse of this very chapter: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice." There is, however, another anger that is not only

permissible, but praiseworthy. If the passage before us means anything, it means that a certain heat of spirit is distinguishable from sin. "In your anger let there be no sin." Dean Alford infers that St. Paul "speaks of anger which *is* an infirmity, but by being cherished may become a sin." We are persuaded that the apostle no more teaches that indignation is an infirmity than that he brands it as a sin. In his view it is neither a sin nor an infirmity, but a native faculty calling for watchfulness and discipline.

Revelation unequivocally declares the Almighty's capacity for anger. His strong resentment against moral evil is a foremost truth that the sacred page never permits us to forget. When His sublime patience is wearied out by the untoward conduct of men and nations they are annihilated by the lightning flash of His holy indignation. The course of nature and the facts of history confirm the teaching of revelation. The grand aspects of nature are chiefly benign; yet the desolations wrought in a land for the wickedness of them that dwell therein denote unmistakably the working of vehement displeasure in Him in whose hand are the deep places of the earth. Mercy is over all

His works, yet the judgement that is His strange work does not fail to express itself in the disasters of creation. The history of nations abundantly illustrates the awful truth. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." And these solemn facts of the present give ample justification to a "certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation," which shall overtake and overwhelm the finally impenitent. Well may we cry with the Psalmist, "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath." But it may be said that the fact of the divine anger does not justify ours. We are satisfied that it does. One commentator on the passage we are considering observes, "Man's anger is never in itself just and permissible, God's anger alone is the holy and just one; to Him, therefore, alone is anger to be left." We submit that the commentator altogether misconceives the passage, and also human nature. Bishop Butler treats the passion of resentment most lucidly, and shows how it has been planted in our nature by a divine hand. "Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, accord-

ing to the experience they have had of it; but human nature, considered as the divine workmanship, should, methinks, be treated as sacred; for *in the image of God made He man.* That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge—even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind. It is in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness." An angry God is not a reflection of imperfect human nature; a righteously angry man mirrors a perfection of the eternally righteous God.

That there is a noble, holy, divine anger, is demonstrated in Him who is for ever the pattern of ideal humanity. Hostile critics have sought to discredit our Lord because of His outbursts of anger; yet certainly His indignation only testified to His true humanity, and gave the highest sanction to one of its native passions. Herbert Spencer has not hesitated to point out that "resentment is not only essential to self-preservation, but is often a moral duty." It would have been strange, then, if He who came to reveal humanity in its perfectness should have failed to exhibit such

an essential faculty or to give us illustrations of its just exercise. He did not fail in either respect. "And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart" (Mark iii. 5). We cannot overlook His purification of the temple when, in "a spirit of zeal, in a spirit of stormy excitement," with a scourge of cords He drove out the buyers and sellers, and overturned the tables of the brokers. In His just and righteous indignation, provoked by the wickedness and hypocrisy of His age, we behold the intense abhorrence with which noble humanity must ever regard obstinate falsehood and licentiousness. Tertullian, a great believer in righteous indignation, was perfectly true to the fact when he declared that Christ, who in so many instances struck fire, proscribed nothing but "irrational irascibility." We may then justly conclude that in considering human anger we are not necessarily dealing with an infirmity or a sin, but with an integral faculty of our nature, a weapon put into our hands by our Maker against injury, injustice, and cruelty.

If this view is correct, we see the error of those who charge Christianity with destroying the virility of human nature, reducing it to a

spiritless thing. This impeachment of the faith has of late been much in fashion. Whilst science has shown that nature everywhere makes the preservation and development of all creatures to depend upon their courage and ability to take care of themselves, the Christian religion, it is averred, breeds effeminacy and brands resentment as a crime. Nietzsche is the most outspoken of these impugners, and writes thus contemptuously of the Christian disciples: "They are lacking in clenched fists; their fingers know not how to hide themselves behind fists. For them virtue is what maketh modest and tame. Thereby they have made the wolf a dog, and man himself man's best domestic animal. . . . Too much sparing, too much yielding—thus it is your soil." So the Christian is scorned as spiritless, unresisting, making of himself a doormat for whoever may be pleased to trample upon him. But this representation certainly does not find confirmation in St. Paul. He constantly taught and exemplified "the meekness and gentleness" of his Master, yet on occasion shows himself capable of wholesome wrath, and hits hard. In his Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians he deals severely with his opponents who are also really opponents

of God's work. No bated breath or whispering humbleness here. His delivery of "Hymenæus and Alexander unto Satan that they might be taught not to blaspheme," is not the hesitating finding of one afraid to speak out and to act accordingly. When again he writes to Timothy, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works," he does not disguise his cheerful acquiescence in the righteous judgement of God. Again and again his manly indignation at hypocrisy and wrong breaks out, and the hypocrite and wrong-doer knew that he was not one to be trifled with. He did not attempt to prove his doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks; but that his staff had knobs in it, men false to truth and righteousness had the best of reasons to know. With all his tenderness and sweetness, it is impossible to believe that St. John was devoid of temper. "St. John was more than the apostle of love. His aspect is not always that of the mild and amiable patriarch of the Church, breathing out, 'Little children, love one another!' Under the placid surface of St. John's nature there lay a slumbering passion, a brooding ambition, that blazed up on occasion with startling

vehemence. Now it is the John Boanerges who reappears in the Apocalypse—strong in contempt and hate no less than in love, whose soul resounded through its whole compass to the 'indignation of the wrath' of Almighty God, that thunders against the haters of His Christ and the murderers of His people. Nor in gospel and epistles is this divine anger—love's counterpart in a world of sin—very far to seek. . . . The holy wrath of the apostle flashes out against immoral pretenders to high Christian knowledge. When he likes, the gentle John can be the most peremptory and dogmatic of teachers. We discern the same strong temperament—love with its possibilities of anger, notes of sharp severity breaking through the winning and tender strain of the apostle's converse—in the two minor epistles." [1] The whole Christian revelation in this matter does no injustice to human nature, it gives its sanction to strong feeling, emphatic speech, a firm attitude, and action that bespeaks conviction, decision, and passionate resolve. It cannot speak too strongly of blind, violent indignation, but it never chills the faculty of indignation itself. Observers remind us that in the English

[1] Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal.*

hedgerows grow two kinds of dog-rose. The white one which is comparatively dull, and being scentless is hardly a rose at all; it is nearly thornless. The pink dog-rose is far more attractive, and truly rose-like; its delicate colour is beyond that of the apple-blossom, and its fragrance rare and delightful. The adage that no rose is without its thorn seems true in an intensive degree, for the rosier of the two common roses is armed with tiger-like talons unknown to the more degenerate species. Does not this fact of botany represent a truth of character? As the gayest bloom of the wayside protects itself by formidable brambles, so rare character demonstrates itself in an emphasis and a courage that make it respected. As we see in our Lord and in His holy apostles St. Paul and St. John, a glowing wrath may exist side by side with heavenliest grace. Spiritless goodness is of a degenerate species.

We see not only the error of those who are hostile to our faith, but the mistake also of many who are its disciples. In the recoil from the excesses of unholy anger we are tempted to cultivate a meekness which is really smallness and impotence, and to this temptation many

good people succumb. And there is a philosophy that is ready to justify this passivity. It would stifle the passions at their very source, contending that diminution of feeling constitutes the path to perfection. A passionless life, we are told, protects us from fretting ourselves away, it restrains from various conflicts and agitations, and the wisest of mankind are therefore not assertive and choleric, but simply discreet, tranquil, complaisant. The less sensibility and enthusiasm, the more happiness. This view will not bear the light of revelation and the test of human life. The ideal of the Old Testament and the New is fullness and intensity of life, vivacity of mind, strength of conviction, energetic inclination, and desire, combined with frank and fearless expression. Says Amiel, " Life is built upon love and hatred," which saying is the equivalent of the divine teaching that we are to love righteousness, to hate iniquity, and not to stifle the expression of either passion. Sir William Crookes, discussing the constitution of the diamond, tells of the state of tension that exists within that gem. In its interior are cavities filled with gas at enormous pressure, and the strain is set up in the jewel by the effort of the gas to escape.

The famous Cullinan diamond revealed a state of considerable internal stress and strain. Human nature at its highest and best, like the jewel, is agitated by interior forces which demand expression; energetic instincts, impulses, and passions which urge to corresponding action; and Christianity gives no sanction to the vulgar methods of breaking the will, extirpating the passions, or of reducing our speech to whispering humbleness. True religion apprehends our whole nature as it came from God's hand; it contemplates the salvation of the soul, still leaving its passions intact; it dares to allow strong anger, whilst yet calling to an ideal perfection. Only a bad man can be cool. Science assures us that "no animal that we know of combines a highly developed brain with cold blood"; we may enlarge the verdict of science, and confidently affirm that the highest style of man has warm affections, a vital temperament, urgent enthusiasms, and fearless speech.

A weak sentimentalism seems to be gaining ground in society in regard to the faults and crimes of men; it has a gracious air, yet it lacks the tonic of a hearty righteousness. Ruskin long ago saw and stigmatized this

pusillanimity. "I believe it to be quite one of the crowning wickednesses of this age that we have starved and chilled our faculty of indignation, and neither desire nor dare to punish crimes justly. We have taken up the benevolent idea, forsooth, that justice is to be preventive instead of vindictive; and we imagine that we are to punish, not in anger, but in expediency; not that we may give deserved pain to the person in fault, but that we may frighten other people from committing the same fault. The beautiful theory of this non-vindictive justice is, that having convicted a man of a crime worthy of death, we entirely pardon the criminal, restore him to his place in our affection and esteem, and then hang him, not as a malefactor, but as a scarecrow. But all true justice is vindictive to vice as it is rewarding to virtue. It is the national expression of deliberate anger, as of deliberate gratitude; it is not exemplary, or even corrective, but essentially retributive. For righteousness' sake a righteous nation does judgement and justice."[1] Since Ruskin wrote, the glow of resentment has still further cooled, and what is left is little more than a painted fire. When

[1] *Lectures on Art.*

virtue has ceased to be capable of anger, it cannot properly be called virtue at all. With the softening of the ferocity of the legislation of olden times society is in danger of losing the fervour of righteousness, and even the Church no longer judges with the authority and passion that strong faith prompts. It is in this lukewarmness that the " blood and iron " philosophy finds its opportunity and acquires the colour of reasonableness. The spiritlessness of good men in the presence of manifest fault and folly relaxes the general moral tone exactly when and where a tonic is most needed, it invites greater evils than it evades, and presages national decline and disaster. We ought to give heed to the warning of Mommsen, " History has a Nemesis for every sin . . . for an injudicious generosity."

In the individual life self-respect is not always duly cherished and a protective resentment practised. There is a false humility which is not the poorness of spirit enjoined by our Lord. For the sake of peace, and yielding to a mistaken idea of Christian meekness, some of the worthiest of men and women permit themselves at last to be outraged with impunity. Bulwer Lytton in a *Fable in Song* describes how a lion and

dog are immured in the same cage. At first the forest lord is the unchallenged master, but gradually he makes one concession after another to the petulance and encroachments of the dog, until at length the noble animal becomes craven, and is bullied and tormented by the assertive cur it could so easily crush. Picture of what transpires in many a household, where a lack of wholesome spirit permits a state of domestic tyranny most painful to witness, and which must be ten times worse to suffer. And in other spheres, noble people fail to withstand selfishness and intolerance until they are despised as mean creatures conscious of their meanness. Most of us know at least a few saints who would be immensely improved by a more sharp and assertive moral courage. We do injustice to ourselves and to our faith when we fail to cultivate and evince a vigorous soul. We may and ought to feel indignation at untruthfulness, injustice, selfishness, or cruelty, whether directed against ourselves or our neighbours. To hint dislike of evil, to enter an amiable protest against it, or to satisfy ourselves with an inoffensive lukewarmness that shrinks from creating unpleasantness in attempting its removal, is not an attitude kindred to

the genius of the Christian faith, nor is it a sign of intelligent loyalty to that faith. "What is my virtue worth? It has not yet lashed me into a rage," cries Nietzsche. For once, at least, he is right. What *is* our virtue worth that does not fire our indignation against folly and wrong? When surrendering ourselves to softness and sentimentality in the interests of comfort and peace, let us remember that such accommodations have their peril equally with firmness and fire. Doughty, in his classic *Wanderings in Arabia*, after recording an instance in which he made a weak compliance to escape disagreeableness, and one which eventually involved him in trouble, adds the reflection, "There is an impolitic humanity which is visited upon us."

The question then emerges, When is anger pure and praiseworthy? First, when it is directed to the right end—such end ever being vehement impatience with foolishness and unrighteousness. To be without sin, it must be directed against sin, or what partakes of the nature of sin. Dishonesty, untruthfulness, harshness, baseness of all kinds and colours, are the legitimate objects of wrath and denunciation. We are not to be angry with a thing. How

much angry temper and invective will be ruled out if this condition is observed! Whenever we are wroth with a thing we ought to accuse and despise ourselves. So utterly childish and insane are these explosions that we may well be ashamed of them. Nor ought we to suffer ourselves to be provoked by the irrational creature. When Balaam, blind with passion, beat his ass, he proved himself more senseless than his beast. When Newton regarded with composure the ruin caused by his dog Diamond, his serene wisdom showed how the rational man is distinguished from the lower creation. Whenever we are enraged by things or creatures we convict ourselves of irrational irascibility, and no small degree of our fierce emotion and protest comes within this designation. Wrath is utterly devoid of justification where wickedness is impossible. Our fellows only are legitimate objects of displeasure, and in dealing with them we must be cautious lest we are excited by mere infirmity and misjudgement. It may be difficult sometimes to discriminate between an error and a fault; but exactly at this ambiguous point noble natures declare themselves in the verdict of charity. How habitually are we exasperated by our neighbour, servant, friend, or child,

when the offence is purely the mistake of ignorance or frailty! We are furious about occurrences which involve no moral questions whatever. Here our conduct partakes of the quality of sin. Only when we are fired by the presence of palpable and deliberate wrong is our wrath righteous. If this canon is strictly observed, how rarely shall we be vexed! Again, just anger observes proportion. In no direction, perhaps, are we so liable to forget the true measure of a thing as here. The great dramatist warns the actor against "tearing a passion to tatters, to very rags"; but how often do we act thus in actual life! The anger that is without sin is held in with bit and bridle; it does not run away with us, like a wild horse. Froude says that Carlyle stormed about the house calling for thunder and lightning, when all that he wanted was the match-box. Very generally we are inflamed by words and deeds of sheer indifference, by trifles that a disciplined mind almost ignores and lightly pardons.

> The ocean into tempest tossed
> To waft a feather or to drown a fly.

If displeasure is to be innocent, its intensity must be regulated by the seriousness of the

offence. Finally, sinless anger is mindful of duration. St. Paul requires that a "bishop must be blameless, not soon angry." And here he counsels, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath"; that is, at the earliest possible moment seek appeasement, exercise forgiveness. It is to be postponed as long as possible and to subside as soon as possible. The shortest winter's day is quite long enough for the working of so dangerous an element; be in haste to cast the fire out of your bosom, lest, however justifiable in its origin and pure in its nature, it should degenerate into malice, hatred, and revenge.

Meyer observes on the passage before us, "It forbids *every kind* of sinning to which anger may lead." How vigilant, then, must we be if anger is to be absolutely free from the subtle taint! Jonah thought he did well to be angry, when his anger was altogether gratuitous and profane. And even when temper is justly aroused, base elements may soon mingle with it and change it into the quality of sin. The exasperation of Moses was in its origin right and noble, yet it was quickly adulterated by the wrath of man that worketh not the righteousness of God. We may flatter ourselves upon the

fierceness of our virtue, when searching criticism would show it to be far less pure than we think. That wonderful instrument the spectroscope with infallible precision reveals the elements which enter into the composition of incandescent bodies, and the experimentalist is often greatly surprised by its discoveries. If we possessed a similar instrument to test the real nature of our glowing indignation, should we always find only precious elements? Rather should we not too frequently be humbled to discover that pride, haste, ignorance, egotism, and uncharitableness defiled what we had counted a noble rage? Well may we plead, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

It will at once suggest itself that perhaps this faculty of wrath is practically uncontrollable. On the one hand, it is to be conserved in all its vitality, we are to remember the warning of Fuller that "to cut the nerve of temper implies a maimed mind," potentially the spark that kindles the most terrible conflagrations must be kept alive; and yet, on the other hand, at every step and manifestation anger seems almost

necessarily to involve sin. The doubt then arises as to whether it is possible so to regulate this apparently wild and dangerous temper that we may at once preserve the integrity of our nature and yet remain blameless; and it is certain that we are more indulgent to ourselves concerning the irregularities of temper than we are in regard to any other fault. Let us at once frankly acknowledge the possibility and obligation of absolute self-control. We are accustomed to talk of the " vagaries " of the lightning whenever it strikes a building and follows an unexpected path. But a lecturer at the Royal Meteorological Society has pointed out that however the lightning may seem to career around buildings in a most capricious manner, its movements are strictly normal in accordance with electrical law, and that whenever it shatters an edifice or sets it on fire it is because of imperfect conductors or conductors badly placed. In another sphere we are tempted to similarly loose thinking, and conclude that the flash of anger is so far outside law that we may not reasonably be held responsible for the sad consequences of its wilfulness. Let us be faithful with ourselves, and lay to heart the fact that the ravages of wrath are not the necessary

results of an overcharged system and lawless currents of energy, but that much rather are they the consequences of the want or weakness of those rational and religious principles which, when maintained in strength and purity, govern all the powers of our nature to safe and salutary issues. We understand that even ordinary matter contains enormous stores of energy ; yet this energy is fortunately kept fast bound by the corpuscles ; if at any time an appreciable fraction were to get free, the earth would explode and become a gaseous nebula. And as certainly as there are in the material world conservative energies which hold in leash its fiercest forces, so in human nature resources are available to restrain and direct the passions which threaten us with utter destruction.

The pressing question, then, remains as to how best we may direct and chasten the full volume of our passion. The specifics propounded for the healing of our physical maladies are sometimes ludicrously inadequate. For example, patients are to be cured by steadily gazing upon medicines variously coloured according to the nature of their maladies ; and we are often made to smile at the fantastic balsams

urged by the quackery of the age. Mental disease also is to yield to strangely slight antidotes. One writer cites cases in which maniacs have been restored to reason by an exclusive diet of cherries. But the treatment of temper by the secular moralist is not rarely the most unsatisfactory of all. We must go far and wide, high and deep, to comprehend and control the forces of the material world; yet it is supposed that a few superficial maxims will suffice to master the strong mysterious forces of our moral life. Plutarch's essay *On Restraining Anger* is full of charming matter. Moralists and poets from that age to this have availed themselves of its insight, its shrewd observations, its wise maxims, as directed against intemperate temper. Whatever pagan antiquity could teach on the subject is said here, and said at its best. Yet how practically unavailing as designed for the correction and government of the powerful passions of our nature! When it is remembered that philosophy had nothing more efficient to offer, we need not be surprised that stoicism urged the stultification of the soul.

Before St. Paul taught the possibility of sinless anger, he unfolded in the preceding chapters

the sublimest truths which appeal to the reason, strengthen the heart, and inspire and uplift the whole spiritual life. Yes; it is only as we vividly recognize the living and righteous God; only as we know the divine forgiveness, and the cleansing of the sin which paralyses the soul, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; only as we know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, the working of the strength of His might, in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; only as we live in the faith and hope of the life everlasting; it is only as these mighty beliefs and experiences take possession of us that we become captains of our soul, masters of the profound energies which agitate us, and that we pilot our way serenely and safely through the elemental war. If we would maintain the powers of our nature in their integrity, giving them full and free activity, yet yielding the devil no vantage-ground, we must habitually dwell on the largest considerations, deriving from them strength and stability in every dangerous hour. We must live under the sky of eternity, fellowship with the Master our constant refuge and delight, the law of love and purity reigning in our heart. Herein lies the secret of sanity, temperance, and sweetness.

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